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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-94-245 *21 December 1994*

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Arab-Israeli Talks

PLO Official on Israeli Draft Law on Elections

TA1912174894 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 19 Dec 94 pp 1, 20

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] A senior PLO official has stated that in the talks with Palestinian negotiators in Cairo, the Israelis presented a modified draft law for Palestinian elections in the autonomous areas.

The Palestinian official, who asked to remain anonymous, told QUDS PRESS that the Palestinian and Israeli sides agreed to keep the details of their talks "secret" during the current stage and until appropriate progress is made. He noted that the Israelis want to hold negotiations according to the Oslo pattern. [passage omitted]

The Palestinian official, who is in close touch with the ongoing talks about elections, said that the Israelis have agreed to the election of a self-rule council comprising 56 members, 30 from the Gaza Strip and 26 from the West Bank. He added that they have also expressed initial readiness to add another four members to the council.

According to the Palestinian official, Israel has agreed to allow Palestinian factions opposed to the Declaration of Principles to participate in the elections provided opposition candidates run as independents and not on the basis of organizations and factions. [passage omitted]

With regard to the participation of East Jerusalem residents in the elections, the Israeli proposal calls for allowing them to participate provided they register outside Jerusalem. They will be permitted to cast their votes in ballot boxes inside Jerusalem, but the votes will be counted outside the city. The Palestinian official refused to provide more details about the Israeli position on the nomination of Palestinians from East Jerusalem to the self- rule council.

The Palestinian official said a clause in the Israeli plan calls for separating the election of the self-rule authority council chairman from elections for the council itself. He added that the plan also does not give the council's chairman the right to dismiss members from or appoint them to the elected council.

The Palestinian official stated that the Palestinian leadership is studying the Israeli plan within a narrow framework and that the Palestinians intend to prepare a detailed response to the Israeli plan. He refused, however, to give more details, saying that the revelation of some clauses might harm the current talks.

Histadrut, Palestinians Fail To Sign Accord

TA2012104994 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 13 Dec 94 p 12

[Article by Avshalom Qave: "Fiasco in Brussels"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A cooperation agreement between the Histadrut and trade unions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were to be signed in Brussels last Wednesday [7 December]. Following months of contacts, talks, and meetings everything was ready: the hosts, the leaders of the Federation of Free Trade Unions, a representative of the Norwegian unions, the tireless sponsors of the contacts, and the main actors—Histadrut Chairman Hayim Ramon; 'Amir Peretz, chairman of the Trade Union Department; Shahir Sa'd, secretary general of the West Bank Trade Unions Federation; and Rasim al- Biyari, chairman of the Gaza Strip Palestine Trade Union Federation, who arrived very late. At the last moment, it all fell through. Al-Biyari demanded that a clause be added calling for the Histadrut to support the establishment of a Palestinian state and the division of Jerusalem. The Histadrut representatives rejected the demand, packed their bags, and went home.

The Histadrut's leadership was and still is very angry with the Palestinian delegates. Others in the organization are rubbing their hands in glee. Labor members said off the record: "Former Histadrut Secretary General Hayim Haberfeld saw what was coming and threw a monkey wrench into the works. They are pleased with Hayim Ramon's failure, but no less with the setback sustained by Jacques Neriya, the head of the Political Department.

Within the framework of cutbacks in department personnel, Neriya closed the representation in South America. According to department employees, since taking on the job Neriya has devoted his energy to reaching an agreement with the Palestinians—while in work relations, it would have wider-ranging implications—for his employer Ramon, who has been pushing for it since taking over office last May.

The events of recent days, especially the Nobel Peace Prize festivities in Oslo, pushed many events to the sidelines, among them the setback in Brussels, although Histadrut leaders could have said, and justifiably: What do you want from us. Everything was already signed and sealed when the Palestinians, or at least some of them, untied the package at the last minute.

Last Sunday, a final meeting was held. The person who worked ceaselessly behind the scenes and up front was Jihad 'Aql, the representative of the joint Jewish-Arabic faction in the Trade Union Movement, who in recent months has worked day and night to iron out a cooperation agreement. He said the clauses were agreed upon on Sunday although several things still had to be amended. The Federation of Free Trade Unions announced that it was prepared to hold a signing ceremony within the framework of a different event taking place that day: the election of a new secretary general for the organization, which represents hundreds of trade unions in over 100 countries. All the notables, except for Rasim al-Biyari, arrived in Brussels as planned and the agreement underwent a final review. The accord

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included an arrangement to transfer organization fees deducted by the Histadrut from Palestinian labor organizations. The allocation was about 8 million shekels for 1994 and 1995. Half the amount would be transferred directly to the trade unions and half would remain with the Histadrut, earmarked for the Palestinians.

Wednesday morning, the final ceremonial aspect was dealt with. The signing ceremony was to take place at 1445, and the seating arrangement and the various speakers had already been decided on. Rasim al-Biyari had just arrived on Wednesday and among all the representatives, including the Palestinians—who had finally caved in—concern and suspicions began to develop that something was cooking behind the scenes. At the 11th hour, al-Biyari demanded that the political clause be added. The Histadrut delegates told him that they could not precede a government decision and that whatever the highest echelons decided in future arrangements would be acceptable to the Histadrut. Al-Biyari refused and all the lobbying by the hosts and the Norwegian delegate was to no avail. Representatives of the organization from around the world had already gathered for the dual ceremony of electing a secretary general and signing the first accord of its kind, but nothing happened.

During the final effort to rescue the ceremony and the signing, Ramon and 'Amir acted with restraint. Neriya shouted at the Palestinian representatives: "Why are you reopening what has already been agreed upon? We have been working on the document for four months." One of the Palestinians responded; "So telephone 'Arafat." Neriya sent the Palestinian to do that in a final attempt to find an honorable compromise. But even during the deliberations, the Palestinians raised the same demand, to, among other things, please the delegates affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the other Rejectionist Front organizations. At one stage, Histadrut leaders had taken pride that they had managed to include in the agreement representatives of groups which do not agree with the peace accords signed by the Nobel Prize laureates.

The question being asked now is who gave the order. According to several Histadrut heads involved in the negotiations, warnings were sent to Palestinian trade union leaders verbally and through leaflets that they would pay with their lives if they signed an agreement with the Histadrut, which is viewed by the Palestinians as being part of the ruling regime and the still existing occupation policy. Another question is whether Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, is behind the decision since he was involved in most of the deliberations and gave his blessing to the accord in a meeting held several weeks ago.

The deliberations on a cooperation agreement began a year ago. A heavily attended meeting took place in Bayt Hanina, but Haberfeld, to the displeasure of many participants, slowed down the process, although he did not close off all the options. One of the clauses in RAM's [Ramon's Histadrut faction] platform in the Histadrut elections says that the matter will be given priority. Ramon even ridiculed Haberfeld and the previous leadership for the way it deal with the contacts meant to work out the ties between the Histadrut and the Palestinian unions, which are still in the initial stages of being establishment.

According to Binyamin Gonen, chairman of the joint faction, what took place in Brussels was natural, part of the birth pangs of a state in the making. Gonen totally agrees with the Histadrut leaders' decision not to include the Jerusalem clause. On the other hand, he warns against what he regards as trends to compromise, such as the Histadrut acting as guardian over the Palestinian unions. Gonen said that as long as there is deep unemployment, especially in the Gaza Strip, and hunger in the refugee camps, we should not expect them to be easy negotiating partners.

Meanwhile, Manpower Department Chairman Me'ir Gat said: "We were ambushed. The Histadrut delegates ran amok toward the agreement. In my view, they should court us and not the other way round."

Hayim Ramon said two days ago in a meeting of the Histadrut Executive Committee that whether there is an agreement or not we must defend the rights of the Palestinian workers.

The unsigned agreement has now gone into deep freeze and it will apparently stay there for some time. The Palestinians gave the Histadrut leadership a slap in the face, but the agreement, like the peace process itself, cannot be done without.

'Aql claims he was personally hurt: "I was certain we were about to face a historic moment, when the rejection fell upon us. I have slogged on the matter for four months, neglecting my family. Still, I continue to be optimistic. In the end, the agreement will be signed."

Israel Said To Reopen Sealed Palestinian Houses

TA2012105494 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 20 Dec 94 p 2

[Report by Jon Immanuel]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Israel has agreed to reopen houses of Palestinian prisoners released early from life sentences and allow others to rebuild their homes, Jamil al-Tarifi, the head of the Palestinian negotiating team on civil affairs, said yesterday.

Al-Tarifi maintained that in his talks with civil administration officials, "We agreed that houses which were sealed or demolished as a result of a security offense committed by a family member who was now released could be repaired or rebuilt." However, each case requires full coordination with the army, he said.

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The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] said it was checking with the civil administration and Defense Ministry on whether there had been a change in policy, as no houses had yet been reported unsealed. [passage omitted]

Inter-Arab Affairs

League Delegation Meets Aidid, 'Ali Mahdi

NC2012104894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0940 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Mogadishu, 20 Dec (MENA)—The Arab League delegation currently visiting Somalia continues its meetings and talks with leaders of the Somali factions, ulema, and tribal chiefs. The objective of these talks is to strengthen the peace and national reconciliation process and learn the viewpoints of the various political and social forces in the Sudanese arena regarding the issues and problems that stand in the way of finding a comprehensive peace agreement ending the four-year civil war.

Ambassador Ahmad Bin-Hala, delegation head and director of the Arab Affairs Public Administration at the Arab League, today stated that the delegation met Major General Mohamed Farah Aidid, chairman of the Somali National Alliance; 'Ali Mahdi, the leader of the Alliance for the Salvation of Somalia; Ambassador Victor Biho [name as received], the UN secretary general's envoy to Somalia; and Lieutenant General Abu-Samah Abu-Bakr, commander of the United Nations Forces, UNOSOM.

He said that Major General Aidid welcomed the Arab League delegation's visit, confirming that it had come at the right time. He expressed his hope that the Arab countries will participate in the reconstruction and building process. The Arab League delegation confirmed during the meeting with Aidid that restoring peace and stability and forming a national unity government will help to provide the appropriate atmosphere for the Arab League and its members to help the Somali people in various fields.

Samir Husni, the official responsible for the affairs of Somalia and the Horn of Africa in the Arab League, said that the meeting with 'Ali Mahdi was beneficial and constructive. Mahdi affirmed that the Arab League is qualified to play an important role to fill the political and security vacuum that will be created after the withdrawal of the UN forces from Somalia. He expressed his readiness to attend any reconciliation meeting the Arab League will call for wherever it chooses.

Samir Husni called on the Arab League countries to respond quickly to Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid's call to finance the activities of the fund for supporting Somalia set up by the Arab League in 1992.

He said that many specialized Arab organizations pledged financial aid to Somalia and created plans to rehabilitate the educational and health institutions as soon as peace and stability are restored.

Ibrahim Sha'ban, who is Egypt's ambassador in Mogadishu and the charge d'affaires of both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and of Sudan in Mogadishu, attended some of the delegation's meetings.

Islamic Affairs

Foreign Ministers Assess ICO Summit Outcome

MM1912144694 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Dec 94 pp 1, 4

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Casablanca, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Four foreign ministers of the Islamic states told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT following the conclusion of the Islamic summit in Casablanca that the conference was positive and that evidence of its success is the achievement of a consensus over the major issues included on its agenda.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal said that the summit was a success at all levels, and that Moroccan King Hassan II's leadership of the summit led to this success. He said that this is evident in the consensus reached over the main issues raised at the summit. He described this consensus as auspicious. [passage omitted]

As for Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', he stressed that the summit's results are positive. He said: We have come out with several important resolutions. Discussions focused on the basic issues concerning the Islamic nation, such as the peace process and the need to advance it on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in order to achieve a comprehensive and just peace.

He said: We also discussed the campaign designed to distort Islam under various terms like terrorism and the use of violence. But the conference drew a distinction between legitimate armed struggle against the Israeli occupation and terrorism. Because Israeli practices against Arab citizens in the occupied territories in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria are terrorist practices.

He added: Of course, there are still factors preventing the convening of an Arab summit. We hope that these factors will disappear. We believe that the parties that contributed to this defect in Arab ranks are responsible, whether regarding their noncompliance with the Arab League charter or their engagement in separate solutions with Israel.

Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said: We discussed all the issues concerning the Islamic nation—which is positive in itself. We have come out with several resolutions, which we hope will be taken seriously. Over the two-day summit we discussed all the challenges facing the Islamic nation, but the important thing is the implementation of the summit's resolutions on the complicated issues preoccupying the Islamic world, such as the issues of Palestine, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Kashmir.

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He cited the summit's condemnation of terrorism and his country's support for this resolution. He said: Iran was the first Islamic state to lose many of its citizens and government officials as a result of terrorist actions. He said: We have always been against all forms of terrorism. Thus we agree to any legitimate action against terrorism.

Algerian Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembri said: The summit concluded its proceedings excellently. Discussions were characterized by general accord over the issues included on the agenda, especially the issues of Jerusalem and the Iraqi-Kuwaiti dispute. The only disagreement was over the definition of POW's and missing persons.

He added: We in Algeria welcomed the condemnation of terrorism under a religious cover, although the issue of Algeria was not raised as a special case. Terrorism and violence were discussed as a general issue concerning the Islamic world. All delegations condemned all the forms of terrorism in which religion is used as a cover. I believe that all the Islamic states are unanimous on the need to safeguard the true picture of Islam and to spare Islamic societies terrorism and violence.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 13 Dec

NC1712134194

[FBIS Editorial Report]The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 13 December edition of the Arabic-language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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2. Muslim Brotherhood Figure Sees Conspiracy in Bosnia
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5. Al-Azhar Students Demonstrates Against Normalization
6. AL-SHA'B, Labor Party Welcome Rapprochement With Yemen
7. Al-Ghazali Deplores Bosnian Situation, Secularism
8. Columnist Notes People's Resentment, Rising Costs
9. Cartoon Features: Butrus-Ghali, NATO

CHIEF EDITOR URGES MUSLIM, ARAB AID TO BOSNIANS

A 1,500-word article by chief editor Majid Ahmad Husayn on pages 1 and 2 under the headline "Bosnia's Massacres Expose Western Civilization...and the Muslim Rulers' Treason", accuses the West of "flagrant conspiracy" against Bosnian Muslims and contrasts the powerful attacks on Iraq during the Gulf crisis with NATO's "dalliance" with the Bosnian Serbs as illustrated by a recent NATO air raid, which caused only one crater on a Serbian airstrip which was soon repaired.

The writer refutes the theory that Serbian hate for Muslims is the outcome of the former Ottoman rule in the Balkans, noting that in terms of religious tolerance "the Ottomans, even in their worst periods, represented the apex of humanitarianism in comparison with the Serbs and their Western allies."

Husayn says the Serbs massacred Bosnian Muslims after World War I, in the years 1941, 1942, 1943, and during the Communist era. He adds that, unlike Iraq and Libya who have sanctions sternly enforced against them, the Serbs are "pampered like Israel" and UN resolutions against them remain unimplemented.

He says the real Western position is to "remove the specter of an Islamic state in Europe" and declares that Israel cannot be uninvolved in "this black alliance" and that it "arms and trains the Serbs."

Declaring that Bosnian Muslims need only money and will undertake to buy the weapons themselves, the writer urges "Arab and Muslim oil emperors" to help them.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD FIGURE SEES CONSPIRACY IN BOSNIA

Ahmad al-Malat, one of the Muslim Brotherhood general guide's two deputies, discusses the issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina in a 2,000-word article on page 5 entitled "Is There a Sickness in Their Hearts?"

He says that the Bosnian Muslims, lacking sufficient weapons in a war that has been imposed on them, find no assistance from other Muslims nor from the "decision-makers across the ocean in Washington, home of the prankster [ul'uban] President whose word and decisions cannot be taken seriously."

Commenting on the UN role in the crisis, he says that this organization is "a den for major countries, where they make plans as they wish, divide the loot, and sell out the poor nations of the south." He says that they have placed at the head of the United Nations "a secretary general who is a Crusader to the bone and who recently announced that he will order the withdrawal of UN forces from Bosnia if the Serbs continue their attacks on Bihac." The writer remarks that this "is a green light to the Serbs to finish off the Muslim remnants there."

Al-Malat declares that the whole issue is a "quadripartite conspiracy whose heroes are Britain, France, Germany, and the United States" who have created unarmed safe havens and left them defenseless against the Serbs. He doubts that the United States will aid the Bosnians or that the West will really stop the Serbs.

He urges Arab rulers to speak less about the issue and provide money for the Bosnian Muslims to buy arms and to allow Muslim youths to go and fight alongside the Bosnians.

BROTHERHOOD MESSAGE TO ICO CONFERENCE CITED

AL-SHA'B reports that during the recently concluded Islamic Organization Conference [ICO] summit in Casablanca, the Muslim Brotherhood's General Guide

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Muhammad Hamid Abu-al-Nasr sent a message to the conference urging those meeting there to "close ranks and strengthen their resolve to confront the proposed new world order, which does not give a significant role to the Islamic world."

The 150-word report, published on pages 1 and 6, says that Abu-al-Nasr's message called for "supplying the Bosnian Muslims with weapons and breaking the unjust siege surrounding them."

Abu-al-Nasr also called for ICO support for the people of Libya, Iraq, Chechnya, and Kashmir and urged that the secession conspiracy in southern Sudan be opposed.

ARTICLE FEARS COPTIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL ENDING

In a 700-word article by Qutb al-'Arabi on page 2, entitled "Is It True That Pope Shanudah Opposes Normalization?" the writer acknowledges and welcomes the Egyptian Coptic Church's public stance opposing travel to Israel and normalization of ties with it. He voices doubts, however, that this declared policy is actually being implemented. He refers to advertisements encouraging trips to Israel being published in the Coptic newspaper WATANI [MY HOMELAND], which he says is close to the Coptic pope.

Citing a report in the same newspaper about a request made by the Coptic Church to Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres to look into a dispute over the ownership of Dayr al-Sultan Monastery in Jerusalem, the writer says he is afraid that this issue is the only thing that stands in the way of Coptic-Israeli rapprochement. Ownership of Dayr al-Sultan Monastery in Jerusalem is disputed by the city's Coptic and Ethiopian Church communities. It is currently in the latter's hands.

The writer refers to Peres' statement that 12,000 Egyptian Copts visited Israel "last year" and concludes his article with these words: "We wish to express our fear that the stance of the Coptic religious authority regarding normalization with the Zionist enemy—a stance we have welcomed—might change."

AL-AZHAR STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST NORMALIZATION

A 250-word report by Mu'tazz al-Hadidi on page 1 says that on 12 December Al-Azhar University students demonstrated against "further normalization with the Zionist enemy" and held a rally at which the Israeli and U.S. flags were burned amid shouts of Allahu Akbar—God is great. The exercise was meant to mark the eighth anniversary of the Palestinian intifadah.

The report says that more than 7,000 students took part in the three-hour demonstration and during the ensuing rally calls were made to "President Mubarak to open the door of jihad to young men, to expel the Israeli ambassador, and immediately recall the Egyptian ambassador from Israel."

The demonstrators urged "the Palestinians, particularly the police force, to halt Palestinian infighting." They also asked the education minister to withdraw all school maps which identify Israel and to replace this with the name of Palestine.

AL-SHA'B, LABOR PARTY WELCOME RAPPROCHEMENT WITH YEMEN

A 120-word announcement signed "AL-SHA'B" in a single-column box on page 1 declares that the Labor Party welcomes the recent meeting between President Mubarak and Yemen's 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, noting that during his visit to Cairo the Yemeni president was accompanied by 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Ansi, a deputy prime minister and a "prominent leader of the (Islamic) Yemeni Reform Grouping."

The announcement says: "We hope that this meeting will mark the beginning of a new era of close ties and that the yellow pens [sensationalist journalists] which have grown accustomed to fishing in troubled waters will retreat."

AL-GHAZALI DEPLORES BOSNIAN SITUATION, SECULARISM

Preacher Muhammad al-Ghazali, in his "This Is Our Religion" back-page column on page 12, expresses dismay at the news of continued Muslim setbacks in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He says the Muslims retreat only under tremendous pressures and leave a casualty on every inch of territory.

He notes that "the entire world bans shipments to the Muslims, including Russia and its allies, all the Europeans, and the United States which does no more than utter encouraging words and make futile gestures from afar."

He expresses astonishment that NATO cannot face "the Serbian gangs" and that the United Nations is planning to flee the country.

Al-Ghazali compares conditions in Bosnia with those in Baghdad during the Mongol invasion and the flight of the Muslims before Christian advance in Granada, Spain in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries respectively. He asks: "What is the secret of these periodic setbacks?"

He decides that the cause due to Muslim divisions and separation from God and His revealed book. He adds:

"I can see an insane rush to appease the Jews and those who stand behind them at the expense of territory and honor. I see secular countries with Muslim populations telling the European governments: Help us to remain secular and prevent the rising generation from returning to Islam."

Al-Ghazali concludes that Islam is being betrayed in many countries and ends his 300-word article with this

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Koranic Verse: "If God helps you, none can overcome you; if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, who can help you?"

COLUMNIST NOTES PEOPLE'S RESENTMENT, RISING COSTS

Muslim Brotherhood columnist Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus, in his usual Tuesday-issue back-page "Common Folk" column notes popular resentment at the rising prices of basic foods and medicines, ascribing them to corruption which, he says, President Mubarak can no longer spot as easily he used to in the early years of his rule.

He asks: "Frankly, common folk do not understand how prices keep on rising despite the active 13-year economic reform program under Mubarak's regime. Where are the reform program's benefits?"

He deplores the unnecessary expenditure coming from the state's treasury for ceremonies like the opera "Aida" and the recent Cairo Motion Picture Festival. He says every cent of the state's wealth must instead be used for the benefit of the poor.

'Abd-al-Quddus concludes: "The people in my country are patient but certainly there is a limit to their patience."

CARTOON FEATURES: BUTRUS-GHALI, NATO

A three-column cartoon on page 12 shows UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus—Ghali sitting astride a chair formed by the Latin capital letters UN. He is picking and casting off the leaves of an olive branch. Very few leaves remain on the branch and those that have been cast down bear the names: Palestine, Somalia, Bosnia, Bihac, Sarajevo. A leaf he just picked off and is about to throw away has a question mark on it.

Another cartoon on page 8 shows a NATO artillery piece firing a tiny bullet which falls to the ground as soon as it leaves the muzzle.

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 13 Dec

NC1812103894

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 13 December edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. ICO Summit To Discuss Important Issues
2. World Higher Mosques Council Meets
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4. Columnist Urges Islamic Solidarity
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6. Muslims Berated for Not Helping Brothers
7. Writer Hopeful for ICO Summit Outcome

ICO SUMMIT TO DISCUSS IMPORTANT ISSUES

An unattributed 100-word report on page 1 says that the very important Islamic Conference Organization [ICO] summit due to start in Casablanca on 13 December will discuss very important issues facing Muslims, including Jerusalem, Bosnia, Kashmir, and terrorism. A further 3,000-word report, by Jamal Salim, on page 20, reviews past Islamic summit conferences and their important resolutions.

WORLD HIGHER MOSQUES COUNCIL MEETS

An unattributed 90-word report on page 1 highlights the outcome of the meeting of the World Higher Mosques Council in Mecca. It says that the council stressed that Jerusalem is Islamic and must return to the Arabs and Muslims and urged a program among Muslims to help their brothers in Bosnia.

ISLAMIC RELIEF PROGRAMS VIEWED

An unattributed 350-word report on page 3 cites the director general of the Islamic Council for Propagation and Relief [ICPR] on its future activities. The official, Tawfiq al-Sharif, says that the main program will be to prepare preachers and grant scholarships to the Bosnians following the agreement signed with the United Nations. The official adds that the ICPR has formed a committee for reconciliation among the warring factions in Afghanistan "despite the failure of four previous attempts; this attempt has specific clauses for reconciliation and any side that rejects it would be denounced as the principal reason for continuing the war." The ICPR program also includes an attempt at national reconciliation in Somalia to be staged next month in either Saudi Arabia or Djibouti.

COLUMNIST URGES ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY

In a 300-word column, "God is Benevolent," on page 10, Majdi Salim views the ICO summit in Casablanca. He says that despite all the important issues that the summit will discuss, one very important theme remains missing, namely that of Islamic solidarity. He argues that "solidarity for the sake of interests differs greatly from true Islamic solidarity. Interests change but Islam is unchanging. True Islamic solidarity brings everybody strength and serves their interests and the Islamic world can confront the challenge through it."

CONFERENCE ON DIALOGUE AMONG RELIGIONS CRITICIZED

A 3,000-word report by Muhammad Isma'il and Mustafa Yasin on page 11 criticizes the Conference on Dialogue Among Religions recently held in Spain. It says that the conference was a "trap for Muslims set by the Jews, who were behind the dialogue, to achieve objectives that have nothing to do with religion or dialogue involving scholars from the three religions." It cites Dr. 'Ali Jum'ah, the shaykh of al-Azhar's representative, who

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says that "the plot was planned to create a rift between Muslims and Christians and make them agree with the Jews and support them in achieving their objectives. This was done through the Jewish representation, which was overwhelming. The Jews formed around 80 percent of the participants, compared with 15 percent for Christians and 5 percent for Muslims and pagans." Islamic writer Fahmi Huwaydi also criticizes the dialogue, saying it was dominated by Jews. He says: "It was never *a dialogue among religions*," adding: "*They wanted to* exploit the meeting and religion to serve the Israeli stance." Egyptian writer Salah-al-Din Hafiz also accuses the Jews "of wanting to crown their historic victory—in peace and war—through demonstrations and propaganda conferences with religious content based on the exploitation of the notion of dialogue among religions so that religions and their dialogues can be made an attractive and magical way for normalization with others." The report then reviews dialogues held since the first one in Chicago in 1893.

MUSLIMS BERATED FOR NOT HELPING BROTHERS

'Adil Dayf berates the Islamic world for not helping their brothers in the former Soviet Union's Muslim republics. In a 150- word column on page 20 he urges Muslim countries to act quickly to help these countries, "since Israel and Russia have tried to exploit these countries' suffering and achieve their interests, which are known to everybody."

WRITER HOPEFUL FOR ICO SUMMIT OUTCOME

In his regular, 600-word, column on pages 23 and 24, al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf views what he calls the dangers, plots, and challenges facing the Muslim world on the eve of the ICO summit in Casablanca as well as divisions among Muslim states. He says: "Despite the gloomy picture, we are not advocating despair, but insisting on the hope that the summit will issue resolutions and recommendations that will improve—as much as possible—the Muslims' conditions and endeavor to let them have their proper place on the world map, since this is an opportunity that will not be repeated if it is lost."

Palestinian Affairs

Qaddumi, Tunis PLO Officials on Oslo Process

TA2112140794 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ (HA'ARETZ supplement) in Hebrew 16 Dec 94 pp 40, 42, 108

[Article by Suha 'Arraf: "Staying Behind in Tunis"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis—Faruq Qaddumi, who holds the title of foreign minister of the PLO, has turned in recent months into a magnet attracting 'Arafat's opponents in Fatah. Since 1973 Qaddumi has headed the PLO's Political Department, which this year changed its name to "the foreign ministry." The establishment of the Palestinian Authority [PA] in Gaza and Jericho did not bring about the closure of his office in Tunis. Other PLO offices continue to operate here. The foreign ministry's 55-person staff went without a salary for three months, until the ministry managed to raise the money itself ($5 million, the source of which remains secret).

Qaddumi, one of the five founding members of Fatah and the only one other than 'Arafat that is still alive, used to represent the pro-Soviet and pro-Syrian line in the Fatah leadership. He objected to the contacts his colleagues had with the Israeli Zionists and made sure not to attend any such meetings. Qaddumi opposed the Oslo agreement from the very outset and did not change his opinion even after the establishment of the PA. He stayed behind in his office in Tunis, from where he follows what he regards as the mess 'Arafat and his colleagues have gotten themselves into.

This is the first time he has agreed to be interviewed for an Israeli paper. The depth of the chasm with 'Arafat and his colleagues, as well as his desire not to broaden it so as to leave the door open for those who grow disappointed with 'Arafat, can be discerned from his diplomatic formulations (and Qaddumi is the PLO's No. 1 diplomat). There are grounds to his hope that the daily grind in Gaza and Jericho will prove him right. After all, some of his friends—such as Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], one of the architects of the Oslo agreement—have already returned to Tunis disappointed.

"The intifadah is what strengthened us," he says. "It tightened the ties between the Palestinians outside and inside the territories, while the Oslo agreement drove us apart. We did not cut our relations with our friends; we allowed them to go through with this experience; we stayed in touch; we argued—but we did not agree with their way of thinking."

A framed proverb done in calligraphy, which hangs in Qaddumi's office, reads: "Accurate organization inspires men, while clutter corrupts the strongest heart." He sits in a large room behind a desk brimming with papers. He does not sport any of the appurtenances of a revolutionary: no kaffiyeh, uniform, nor even a mustache. He smokes cigars, but even that does not seem to be a conscious effort to emulate Fidel Castro. He is 60 years old, a native of Nabulus, who met the other Fatah founders while working in Kuwait. His political position in the PLO—a kind of roving superambassador—has not mellowed his stands; perhaps the opposite is true. Abu-Iyad [Salah Khalaf], one of Fatah's five cofounders, once revealed that as early as July 1967 Qaddumi had proposed that the organization's Central Committee announce its willingness to assume responsibility for the West Bank and Gaza Strip where "Little Palestine" would be established, but the idea encountered opposition at the time.

'Arafat's supporters now say that Qaddumi remains stuck in the past, with slogans and analyses that may have suited the situation 20 years ago. Each time Fatah

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and the PLO tried to update their platform and adapt to the changes, some members left or split up, and all of them vanished within the rejectionist groups and lost all popular support. Who can today remember Abu-Musa [Sa'id Musa Muragha] who rebelled against the Fatah leadership, or Khalid al-Fahum who is now in Damascus and continues to claim to be the chairman of the Palestine National Council?

Qaddumi also knows that, and he denies the rumors that he and his friends in Tunis are setting up a separate organization. "No, that is not true," he says. "We are trying to improve the conduct of the leadership."

['Arraf] What part of the PLO stayed in Tunis?

[Qaddumi] The basis stayed.

['Arraf] What does that mean?

[Qaddumi] The foreign ministry, the political department, the refugees department, the communications ministry—everything.

['Arraf] The word is that 'Arafat would like to remove you from Tunis.

[Qaddumi] I do not think he will dare do such a thing. It will cause him many problems.

['Arraf] Why did you actually object to the Gaza-Jericho agreement?

[Qaddumi] I felt this agreement did not even begin to meet our minimal requirements. I was not the only one who objected to the agreement and to relocating to Gaza; other colleagues also did. Those who thought this move was the beginning of the liberation that would later expand to a larger territory must now admit that they were wrong. What is happening today shows the exact opposite: Israel is piling more and more obstacles before the Palestinians. Under the excuse that they are putting this miserable agreement into practice, the Israelis actually continue to confiscate land and refuse to release Palestinian prisoners. The Israeli army continues to go wild, and this is compounded by the prolonged closure imposed on the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Rabin has been pressuring the Palestinian government to confront Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad to bring about the eruption of a civil war. The Jews are quite sure that this is what will happen.

['Arraf] Do you think that the clash outside the mosque in Gaza was a result of that pressure?

[Qaddumi] Yes, it was a Zionist plan. The role of the Palestinian policeman is to see to the welfare of the people, not to beat them up. We must always remember that our enemy is the Israeli occupation, which we must continue to fight through the blessed intifadah. This is our recommendation to the local leadership, because this is the only thing that can mend our political path. Only the intifadah can raise our people to a more advanced stage. We have a lot of work to do; we must close our ranks to build our institutions and society and not to fight each other. An internal struggle would make us forget who our enemy is, and we would thus be serving its interests.

['Arraf] Is there serious danger of a civil war?

[Qaddumi] No, there will be disturbances here and there, but our people have a very high consciousness and will not allow it. What will happen is that the current government will fall as a result of these disturbances. As Palestinians, we must understand that the central enemy is Israel and that the conflicts between the factions are not over matters of principle but over marginal issues. Throughout this period, which is a transition period, there has been immense political pressure. We must understand that signing an agreement does not mean that peace has come, but that we have moved from a tough time to a more complicated period during which we must present a strategic plan that will underscore our goals in the transition period. Most of our objectives remain unchanged, objectives such as ending the prolonged Israeli occupation, which is the foremost sacred goal; upholding the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; and the activities necessary for being able to control the area through construction and renovation.

['Arraf] Did you not fulfill those goals in Gaza and Jericho?

[Qaddumi] My friends' going to Gaza is an historic transition in the annals of the Palestinian struggle. However, we cannot be satisfied with it. Gaza is a ghetto where the Palestinian people live.

['Arraf] And what do you propose?

[Qaddumi] What we see today is the result of the negative situation in which the entire Arab nation encounters itself, and it denotes national weakness. However, this situation is also a clear sign that we are getting closer to a comprehensive solution, to a very strong national intifadah.

['Arraf] I am still not clear about the solution you propose.

[Qaddumi] National dialogue is the only way to solve political problems. We must solve those problems as brothers, as adults and as understanding people. Everybody, including the Palestinian government, must understand that we work as a team in one single national framework with one strategic goal. The use of arms to solve problems is a deviation from the national code, and it harms our noble goal as Palestinians with a long history of struggle.

['Arraf] If so, what prevented you from going to Gaza?

[Qaddumi] If my going there hinges on the approval of the occupiers I have been fighting, I refuse to go there. That is inconceivable.

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['Arraf] What future do you foresee for Israel?

[Qaddumi] Israel's existence is a very serious problem, it is a state built on the destruction of another people. Israeli society will no longer grow and expand naturally as all other societies. The Israelis suffer many contradictions because of their internal problems, because there is more than one language and many ethnic groups in Israel. These problems will worsen and become more acute as time goes by and will find expression in political organizations or their leaders, each of whom sees the future differently.

['Arraf] Do you think Israel will lose its advantage in the Middle East?

[Qaddumi] We all know that the world supports Israel. Therefore, it will manage to attain some of its goals, but not for long. It will not be able to go on being an occupier. In this day and age, man is the most central and decisive factor; he dictates reality, not the number of weapons. The Soviet Union had 33,000 nuclear bombs, and it collapsed. Israel's lot will be similar. There is an historical necessity: History dictates itself.

['Arraf] If that is the case, what is your problem with the agreement?

[Qaddumi] It is not my problem, but the problem of the Middle East. The Jewish-Arab conflict will end only when the prisoners are released, all Palestinian refugees return, settlements are dismantled, and the Palestinian people's right to self-definition is recognized. The main problem is that of the refugees; if this problem is not solved, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

['Arraf] You all seem to ignore the problem of the Palestinians living in Israel. What will become of them?

[Qaddumi] We cannot treat the Palestinians of 1948 as we treat Gaza and Jericho because we would be bringing upon ourselves unnecessary problems and troubles. They are doing quite well for themselves with the opportunities available to them. We cannot dictate to them what their fate will be. [end Qaddumi]

One of the factors that induced 'Arafat to say yes to the Oslo agreement was the PLO's fragile position in Tunis. The PLO's political headquarters was moved to Tunis following the evacuation from Beirut in August 1982, when the leaders were followed by about 1,000 fighters, mostly from Fatah. During the Palestinian civil war, which flared up in the wake of an uprising in Fatah in 1983, 'Arafat's followers lost their bases in most of Lebanon. Abu-Musa's men, supported by Syria and pro-Syrian Palestinian organizations, managed to drive 'Arafat and his men to Tripoli. When they were shipped out of Tripoli in December 1983, some 8,000 joined their comrades in Tunis.

The Tunisian Government agreed to host the PLO on its territory for a period of 10 years, and the PLO pledged not to engage in military activities in Tunisia. The Tunisians were afraid that the presence of thousands of Palestinians would endanger their prosperous tourism industry. After the Israeli Air Force had bombarded the PLO headquarters in al-Hamma in October 1985, the Tunisian Government forced the PLO to reduce its deployment in the country. When the 10 years were over, the Tunisian Government agreed to extend the agreement by no more than another year, and when that year elapsed, by an additional year, which is about to end. The PLO was clearly forced to search for a new base. A base farther away from the homeland was out of question, and Arab countries situated close to the homeland refused to host the PLO on its terms. The Gaza-Jericho plan provided 'Arafat with a tenable solution.

In Tunis, the PLO offices conduct their activities—at least in appearance—as if nothing has changed. The personnel has naturally dwindled, after many staffers left for Gaza and became part of the PA. Some 1,000 Palestinians, whose names were not on the lists submitted for Israeli approval of entry permits to Gaza and Jericho, are still in Tunis, as are the 340 who avoided entering the PA for security reasons. A total of 77 were not granted an Israeli entry permit to the autonomous areas.

'Arafat supporters are a minority among the remaining PLO staff. Their headquarters, managed by Sami Muslim, is located in 'Arafat's office in the exclusive Yugarta neighborhood. The office employs about 10 people. PLO-Tunis members say that 'Arafat has retained the office mainly to be able to collect information on his opponents' activities. The other offices still receive funds from the PLO coffers, but employees who were paid by Fatah no longer receive their wages.

The opposition is not homogeneous. It includes people like Qaddumi who are opposed to the entire agreement and others who have reservations only about 'Arafat's methods. They all contend that 'Arafat's actions are undemocratic, that he acts alone, and the sharpest criticism is directed at his appointments and the factors that affected his choice of candidates for various jobs.

So far 'Arafat has failed to convene the supreme PLO institutions either in Gaza or Jericho. Over half their members did not show up on time. On his way back from Oslo this week, he is due to stop over in Tunis to attend a PLO Executive Committee meeting. He has encountered organizational difficulties even inside Fatah. Of the 18 Fatah Central Committee members who lived outside the territories until this year, eight are still in Tunis. Their very existence there depends on 'Arafat's goodwill. His relations with the Tunisian Government improved greatly following the Cairo agreement, and if he decides to close his opponents' offices, they will all be forced to leave.

Here is the situation in the remaining PLO offices: Some 100 workers are employed at the PLO office, which is managed by Hakam Bal'awi, the Palestinian ambassador

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in Tunis. Bal'awi, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, visited Gaza in the hope of receiving the defense portfolio. When he realized that 'Arafat was in no hurry to grant him that, he returned to Tunis. The working conditions in the office are somewhat reminiscent of the central Gaza prison: narrow corridors, rooms inside rooms, but no iron bars. Office doors reflect their occupants' ranks: Offices occupied by senior officials have very thick doors, to stop assassins' bullets.

Faruq Qaddumi employs 55 workers in his foreign ministry. Abu-Mazin has returned from Gaza to head the international relations department, in which some 30 persons, excluding bodyguards, are employed. In Tunis this office has been dubbed the "Jewish Agency" due to Abu-Mazin's close ties to the Zionist left wing. Abu-Mazin, who is also a member of Fatah's Central Committee, was the moving force behind the Cairo agreement (Gaza and Jericho First), and is today one of Yasir 'Arafat's opponents. Tunis sources explain his motives in various ways: Some claim he has returned to Tunis because 'Arafat did not give him the post he had promised him (vice president); others say this is only one of the reasons and that Abu-Mazin also opposes 'Arafat's policy. Abu-Mazin refused to be interviewed, saying this is not the right time to attack the PA, but in the three hours I spent in his office he did not stop criticizing 'Arafat.

Instead of an interview, Abu-Mazin gave me his book, "The Oslo Road." In this book he writes: "The Palestinian people, who for dozens of years struggled against the occupation in order to achieve freedom, will let no ruler take this away from them." Abu-Mazin also writes about the beginning of the dispute between him and 'Arafat after the agreement on the Declaration of Principles [DOP]: "('Arafat) started talking about 'Gaza-Jericho' as a complete plan in itself, and this is how he presented it to Muslim presidents with whom he met—so much so that we felt he was reducing the entire DOP to this aspect. He ignored all the other problems (included) in the DOP, limiting himself to what was included in the Gaza-Jericho agreement. He did this to the point that many people figured the ensuing agreement was limited to Gaza and Jericho." Later he continues: "We explained to him that there are certain things in the DOP that must be implemented, and he replied: 'I want Gaza-Jericho; what can I do with the DOP? What do I need it for, just to frame it and hang it on a wall?'"

The office of Muhammad Ghunaym [Abu-Mahir], also a member of Fatah's Central Committee, also remains in Tunis. The office bears the title "recruitment and organization," but it is unclear what its staff deals with nowadays. Abu-Mahir refused to be interviewed. People in PLO-Tunis are uncertain about his political stand. When the Fatah leadership discussed the agreement, he supported it, but after it was signed he sharply opposed it.

The refugee affairs department is headed by 'Abdallah al-Hurani, member of the PLO's Executive Committee, who is known to be one of the strongest opponents of the agreement. The "united media offices" also continue to operate in Tunis, under the direction of Ahmad 'Abd-al-Rahman, chairman of the Palestinian Journalists and Writers Association, who was a candidate for the post of communications minister. People in Tunis say 'Arafat told him: "I will be communications minister, and you will be my deputy," whereupon 'Abd-al-Rahman took his belongings and returned from Gaza to Tunis. His office's activity was curtailed, but he still employs about 20 workers.

"Our present activity," he says, "focuses on issuing a daily report in which we review foreign publications in order to update our leadership about what is going on. In the past we used to be the PLO's media office, responsible for distributing information and issuing statements to the press. Any foreign crew or correspondent who wanted to interview someone from our leadership was supposed to go through us. We also published the organ FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH (Revolutionary Palestine), of which I was chief editor. After the agreement was signed it was discontinued. We were also in charge of the WAFA news agency, which since then has been transferred to Gaza."

'Abd-al-Rahman, 49, was born in Kafr Shanna, a village 6 km from Ramla, which was destroyed in 1948. His family settled in Jerusalem. He joined Fatah during his studies in Lebanon and returned to Jerusalem in 1982. "I stayed on for two years and then went to Syria and later to Tunis, where I have remained to this day. After the PA's establishment I came to Gaza with Abu-Mazin, but we were both dissatisfied, because we did not receive any posts and did not like the situation in Gaza. We had nothing to do there so we came back to Tunis.

['Arraf] What expectations do you have?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Until the Israelis withdraw from the West Bank there will be no change.

['Arraf] Do you believe the agreement will hold?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I am convinced it will not.

['Arraf] Why?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Because of the central issues that have not yet been discussed. The border issue is still unclear, and so are the issues of the refugees, settlements, and the right of the entire Palestinian people to self-determination.

['Arraf] Will the agreement explode because of this alone?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Not only because of this. Since 'Arafat entered Gaza he has been concentrating on internal socioeconomic issues. This is why no progress has been made. The problems stem from disorder, which in turn stem from bad management. 'Arafat cannot rule. He rushed to appoint people on the basis of the trite theory that familiar persons should rule and is making

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his appointments on the basis of names. In fact, it is all appointments and no elections, the wrong people in the wrong places.

['Arraf] Why do you not go there to save the day?

['Abd-al-Rahman] If we go we will oppose him, and he will not give us any senior posts. We will have no power or political influence.

['Arraf] Did you foresee confrontations such as those that occurred with Hamas in Gaza?

['Abd-al-Rahman] We did not think it would be that bad.

['Arraf] Do you think there will be a civil war?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I do not think it will reach that point. Our nation has gained self-awareness and experience during its struggle. We will not become another Somalia, Afghanistan, or Lebanon.

['Arraf] What remains of PLO-Tunis?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Everything. The PLO's legs entered the autonomy area, but the head remains abroad.

['Arraf] I heard that 'Arafat wants to move the PLO's offices from Tunis. What will you do?

['Abd-al-Rahman] This is an organizational matter. It is not easy to reach such a decision; he will have problems. Besides, we are determined to remain in Tunis.

['Arraf] People in the PLO offices speak about a restructuring process within Fatah.

['Abd-al-Rahman] Fatah is going to split up. By its nature Fatah is a national movement; it cannot become the exact opposite. I am sure that all the patriots within Fatah will understand the truth and know where to go.

['Arraf] It took you a very long time to start criticizing 'Arafat and the leadership. Where were you until now? What did you do, for example, when AL-NAHAR was closed down and journalists were not allowed to speak out?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I must confess that we did nothing.

['Arraf] Why?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Because we were disorganized and it was very difficult to do anything.

['Arraf] You did not even denounce the move.

['Abd-al-Rahman] That is true. There were problems, and we learned our lesson. It is a sin to remain silent in such a case. He harmed civil rights and the freedom of the press. We have always dreamed about a democratic state in which relations between the leadership and the people are just and frank and where there is room for criticism and clarifications. Today ties are dictated from above, from a leadership that is preventing free expression of opinions by the use of terror. This is not good for us and for our national interests.

['Arraf] What did you think about the Oslo agreement?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I did not open my mouth, because people looked at the Oslo agreement from a very narrow viewpoint, as saving the PLO from disintegration. There were internal problems that I cannot broach here.

['Arraf] Are you against the agreement?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Not exactly. When I reached Gaza and saw the situation there, however, I understood that such an agreement cannot be implemented. It is extremely complicated; the border issue is vague, and so is everything else.

['Arraf] You are considered a student of Abu-Mazin, who authored this agreement. How do you explain this?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Reading something on paper is very different from seeing it on the ground. The situation on the ground is completely different.

PA Officials on Negotiations, Hamas

NC1912193094 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 16 Dec 94 pp 26-31

[Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, planning minister and head of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks; Major General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya, chairman of the security committee; Hasan 'Usfur, director of the negotiations and secretary at the Oslo talks; and Dr. Nabil Qassis, nuclear physics teacher, by Salwah Abu-Sa'dah, Majdi Siblah, Albert 'Azar, and Hilmi al-Namnam in Cairo on 14 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-MUSAWWAR] How are the current conditions in Gaza and will the recent Brussels meetings lead to more understanding between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Israel?

[Sha'th] The peace process followed a costly struggle that claimed the lives of more than 5,000 martyrs while 134,000 Palestinians between six and 16 years old were injured and 120,000 Palestinians between eight and 18 years old were imprisoned.

Israel had completed a withdrawal from 82 percent of the Gaza Strip when the PA entered on 17 May 1994. Our people lived happily and stayed awake until morning for the first time. Curfew used to be imposed every night. The Palestinian police force numbering 5,200 officers and soldiers entered. They were followed by the policemen's families and by 2,800 Palestinian political cadres, the majority of them refugees since 1948, led by the Palestinian president himself. As a result, around 20,000 Palestinian families have returned to Gaza and Jericho.

The Palestinians lived for two months in legendary dreams and real happiness. Problems then began to appear. Israel dithered in implementing some clauses of the agreement. This dithering created a high sense of

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disappointment among the Palestinian masses, particularly as Israel did not release 5,000 Palestinian prisoners during the first month as it was committed to do. It was supposed to release 5,000 others gradually, according to the type of crimes and the sentences issued against them. It was also supposed to release 27 female Palestinian prisoners but only released eight, one of them because she had cancer.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Was the prisoners issue the only one that caused the disappointment and problems?

[Sha'th] Not a single act of violence took place during the first two months that followed the entry into Gaza. The citizens themselves confronted such incidents. The "al-Jihad" Organization staged an operation in Erez on 17 May, which resulted in the death of two Israeli soldiers. Public opinion opposed this incident on the grounds that it would delay the peace process and the withdrawal. The prisoners were not released after it and suicidal operations were then staged to kidnap Israelis and exchange them for some of the prisoners.

Besides the prisoners issue, there is the problem of the international border crossings that we were supposed to take over immediately. But we have not yet taken control of them. Even the crossing points for vehicles and goods are still under Israeli control and no goods can enter the West Bank and Gaza except through the Israeli crossing points.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Does the agreement stipulate Israel's control of these crossing points?

[Sha'th] There is a very complicated dispute on this issue. What is operational now is the presence of some Israelis to ensure that no weapons or persons not allowed to enter without the agreement of both sides are smuggled in. There is a difference between the presence of Israelis at the crossing point and having full control. For example, you will find in the Rafah crossing point 100 Palestinians doing everything and only two Israelis to review some of the lists. Not a single Palestinian was in this crossing point three weeks ago.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Following these operations, can we be told the real size of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the al-Jihad?

['Abd-al-Razzaq] We do not have figures about their size. We regard these two organizations as nationalist ones established to resist the occupation alongside "Fatah." But the problem with Hamas and al-Jihad is that they came into being quite late and therefore are operating in the same way we were several years ago. We believe that our strategy of the long-term war cannot be applied now in the way Hamas and al-Jihad are doing because their operations do not achieve success in favor of the Palestinians but only lead to Israeli reactions that complicate the situation even more.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How do you explain the support of part of the silent majority of Palestinians for Hamas, a support that has reached the point where the PA found itself compelled either to negotiate with Hamas or face civil war?

['Abd-al-Razzaq] I believe a Palestinian civil war is very unlikely. A state of cautious calm currently prevails and it has given us an opportunity to negotiate and take further steps in the peace process. It was the negative atmosphere caused by Israel's failure to implement the agreement's provisions that produced the violence. Hence I believe that the incidents that occurred did not proceed from a firm belief or dogma and therefore I think that they will not be repeated. They were an emotional reaction.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Do you really believe that Hamas and Islamic Jihad are behaving emotionally? Or do they have a different strategy from that of Fatah?

['Abd-al-Razzaq] When I talked about an emotional reaction, I was referring to the popular reaction of Palestinians, not Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] On what basis were negotiations carried out between Hamas and the Palestinian leadership?

['Usfur] We inherited a lot of domestic tension from Israel. Israel allowed weapons to proliferate among the Palestinians prior to its withdrawal. When frustrations grew, the weapons quickly appeared and the events of bloody Friday occurred. Furthermore, we must confess that our political thinking is flawed, particularly with regard to our perception of authority. The Palestinian citizens cannot differentiate between fraternal relations among strugglers in the days of national struggle and the rule of law that must be obeyed once a national authority is established. So far there are no laws governing the relationship between the PA and the citizens. The performance of Palestinian departments also has not pleased the public in Gaza and Jericho.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Is the PA's poor performance the result of a lack of funds or the fact that no state institutions have been established?

['Usfur] The first cause is the way that authority has been exercised in real life for the first time. Another cause of poor performance is the relationship between the Palestinians from inside the territories and those from abroad.

[Sha'th] I believe that the first cause is the "mass punishment" method used by Israel whenever an attack is carried out and that involves preventing 80,000 Palestinians from going to their places of work and banning Palestinian exports from the ports, particularly flowers, vegetables, and fruit. Additionally, do not forget that 45 percent of Gaza's residents are under 16 years of age, a percentage unknown anywhere else, and in the case of mass punishment this causes total paralysis in the area. Add to this the delay of international aid, which has caused further frustration and has created a form of popular pressure. I must mention here that part of the

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siege against us has been Arab. [Pakistani Prime Minister] Benazir Bhutto tried to visit us, although unsuccessfully, and the Turkish prime minister actually visited us. No Arab leader tried to visit us.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Let us again discuss the negotiations between the PA and Hamas. Why are these negotiations justified? What have they resulted in?

['Usfur] There are no negotiations or dialogue in the common sense. We are not two different parties or a majority and a minority. What is taking place is a dialogue among all Palestinian factions that is being sponsored by the PA. At any rate, the elections will decide this issue.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Has an agreement been reached between Hamas and the PA and what are its bases?

['Usfur] We have not reached an agreement so far. The basis is to overcome what happened on bloody Friday; in other words, that no Palestinian weapons be used against Palestinians and to regard such a thing as part of what is forbidden.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Does Hamas have a strategic line that does not agree with the PA's?

['Usfur] Hamas opposes the peace process but not the PA.

[Sha'th] Hamas is not against negotiations with Israel or recognition of it within the borders drawn up in 1967. But it is specifically against the Gaza-Jericho agreement because it believes that the agreement does not satisfy its minimum demands for a political solution. However, it does recognize the PA.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How does Israel see the question of negotiations between the PA and Hamas?

[Sha'th] Israel is very annoyed because it wants the PA to turn into the opposition forces' hangman. We will never do that. There is a difference between our compliance with the rules of security agreed on and the Palestinian parties' commitment to them and our turning into the black hangman of the opposition political forces. 'Arafat has been provoked many times in the past six months to do so but he exerted superhuman efforts to control the situation and did not allow any bullet to be fired at a Palestinian. What happened on sad Friday was the exception. Giving Hamas a real role in the decision-making process will make it shoulder the responsibility. Evidence of this is that Hamas leader Mahmud al-Zahhar went out into the streets with 'al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim to remove the hostile slogans painted on the walls after that Friday.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] We have the feeling that the Israelis are procrastinating in expanding self-rule using security as an excuse. Since Dr. Nabil Qassis is the only one here who resides in the West Bank, how do you see the issue overall?

[Qassis] It should be said that the agreement was not satisfactory for many Palestinians. Some parties have struggle programs that have not been completed. Yet, we all support the PA and are not against it. Elections must be held for the authority to gain the support and backing of the Palestinian street. Then it will be able to apply the law and tackle all problems, even law- breaking ones. But the elections are linked to the agreement with Israel and involve a number of specific measures, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces in the occupied territories.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will holding the elections alone solve most of the problems?

[Qassis] Economic progress and improvement in the standard of living will certainly lead to containment of the political problem, weaken the opposition, and give impetus to the authority. I believe that receipt of international aid will alleviate much of the crisis.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What are the stances of Hamas and al-Jihad on the elections?

[Sha'th] There are contradictions in the Hamas and al-Jihad statements on the elections. They express readiness to enter municipal but not legislative elections. But is it logical for them to accept legislative elections under Israeli rule and reject them under nationalist rule?

I believe that their stance is a tactical and not a strategic one. Their aim is to wait to see the conditions for the elections: whether they will be free or not, whether they will involve a system of electing individuals or lists, and whether electoral districts will be closed or open. All these issues will be decided through negotiations.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Who will have the right to vote in the next Palestinian elections?

[Sha'th] The only problem here are the Palestinians living abroad. Apart from this, the relevant clause in the agreement states that all the Palestinians living inside the territories have the right to be candidates and to vote. Jerusalem Palestinians have the right to vote only. As for Palestinians living abroad, their rights will be protected when they return.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What kind of body will the elected Palestinian council be?

[Sha'th] Basically it will be a legislative council. From among its members will come the members of the executive council, "the ministers." Israel wants all the members of the Palestinian cabinet to be chosen from the members of the elected council. This is the system followed in Israel itself. Other government systems follow a different policy. We want some of the ministers to be elected and some to come from outside the elected council. Originally we wanted the council to have 120 members, but they said only 86 members. The issue was settled by negotiations.

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[AL-MUSAWWAR] Which side does the text of the agreement support?

[Sha'th] Actually what the Israelis are asking for is closer to the text of the agreement.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How will the president be elected?

[Sha'th] We proposed that the president be elected by popular vote, but Israel demanded that he be chosen by the council members. We rejected this.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Does Israel refuse to let the president be elected by general vote so that he will be the people's choice?

[Sha'th] Rabin told 'Arafat during their recent Madrid meeting that Israel does not object to the president's election by popular vote. However, there has not been any official announcement about this yet.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will the council ratify the president's election after he is chosen by popular vote?

[Sha'th] No. The council will only elect its own chairman. The council will also have supervisory powers over the prime minister. The Palestinian president, however, will be elected by popular vote.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What are Israel's views on the elections?

[Sha'th] Israel has a supervisory role in the elections, particularly over voting by Jerusalem residents and the manner in which they will take part in the elections. The Oslo Agreement provides for participation by Jerusalem residents in the elections. We interpret this as full participation, but Israel believes that the participation should take the form of voting only and says the Jerusalem Palestinians cannot run for office or take part in election campaigning.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What are their views on supervision?

[Sha'th] As they see it, three Israeli and three Palestinian judges will do the supervision. They will be given full supervisory powers. We believe, however, that supervision must be carried out by Palestinian and international personnel and that Israeli personnel must be present only to make sure that the agreement is being properly observed.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What forces or political parties will have a right to run in the elections?

[Sha'th] Our decision is clear: everyone is completely free to form political parties. Everyone above 18, both male and female, will have the right to vote. The system will not be one of proportional representation but a system of constituencies. Every constituency will be won by majority vote. Jerusalem residents will have one closed constituency.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Judging by the existing political factions, who do you expect to win the elections? According to some reports, the opposition has the support of 40 percent of the electorate?

[Sha'th] Opposition depends on the mood of the moment. If a vote is taken over the agreement, the opposition will get only 10 percent of the vote. In an election for parliament, the opposition will not get more than 30 percent.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How much aid has been received?

[Sha'th] Some $740 million has been allocated for the first year. By September we only received $70 million. At present we have received $140 million. By the end of the year we will have received $240. In Brussels, $200 million has been allocated, including $102 million for current expenses, $23 million for quick employment projects, $58 million for medium-term infrastructure projects, and $25 million from Saudi Arabia for long-term projects.

In addition, $200 million in the form of loans for the private sector have been released by the European Bank for Investment. All these are small sums compared to what we used to receive before the second Gulf war. We used to receive $500 million annually from the Arab parties alone.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Questions are being asked about transparency and accountability?

[Sha'th] What transparency? There are three groups of international observers who approve every cent paid to us. There are observers before payment is made and observers after payment is made. We are suffering from an extreme case of bureaucracy in getting funds. Suffice to say, any project financed by U.S. aid needs two years for approval and implementation. No buyer from the European market can buy any goods from us before nine months have passed. Moreover, there are conspiratorial reasons for obstructing payments, including the desire of a certain state to compel us to accept conditions which Israel could not get during the negotiations, conditions which are mainly connected with the Palestinian police. This state has attached certain conditions that are considered direct intervention in our affairs, such as its insistence that not a cent should go to projects in Jerusalem.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Does this mean that financial aid for the PA is tied to these factors and consequently little aid will come?

[Sha'th] We are not prepared to give up Jerusalem in return for any benefit. We are not prepared to give up our independence in regard to the Palestinian police issue. Ten days ago we rejected $4 million from that state because it wanted to impose further conditions on us. In fact, in Brussels a kind of awareness occurred, the gist of which is that a change in the financial support for the PA would wreck the peace process.

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[AL-MUSAWWAR] Does this awareness assure you and does it lead at least to the creation of a mechanism in Gaza that will take care of development projects?

[Sha'th] I am not very assured, because a mechanism can also obstruct development. The donor nations could at least prevent Israel from closing the border, because the closure costs us $3 million daily, which translates into $100 million per month. This sum is three times the monthly support. The Israelis have promised not to close the border to goods, tourists, and investments. These are reassuring things for investors. Israel still insists on closing the border to workers but has promised not to stop crossings at the international border checkpoints.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Therefore, you have not reached agreement on entry for workers?

[Sha'th] The final statement said that the donor nations expressed the hope that Israel will keep a level of employment of not less than 70,000 workers. Before the Brussels meeting, there were only 12,000 workers. Now they number 30,000. The Israelis have said that they will increase the number gradually.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How long will the Palestinian economy remain dependent on the Israeli economy?

[Sha'th] We do not want this, but we need some time to build an infrastructure and establish investment projects. We have a huge potential. In the past three years Palestinian farmers have exported 50 million carnations to the Netherlands using only 100 feddans of land with an investment of $25 million. These exports will increase four fold. This project provides 15,000 jobs and gives a return for six months of the year. Carnations need little water.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] We note that the comrades of Tunisia are not active in this effort and the Palestine National Council [PNC] has not been meeting. Why? And where have 'Arafat's comrades gone?

[Sha'th] More than half the members of the Central Committee are PA members. The important ministers in the PA are Central Committee members, such as Economy Minister Abu-al-'Ala', Finance Minister Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, Education Minister Yasir 'Umar, Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, and Abu-'Ammar himself. But a number of the Executive Committee members have stayed in Tunisia.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why have they stayed in Tunisia?

[Sha'th] Some believe—and they are right in this—that not all the Central Committee members should return since the final peace has not been completed and the presence of a recognized center in Tunisia gives a reserve to the Authority inside and gives it the ability to move abroad when Israel besieges us, as is the case now.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Are there specific roles for the members inside and those in Tunisia?

[Sha'th] The members in Tunisia could help with the refugee issue, the problem of Palestinians abroad, and in raising issues at the United Nations. But they have no intention to interfere in foreign programs, as this would embarrass the donor countries and make them always ask: With whom are we talking and whom should we listen to? I believe that they should take a back seat here.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] "Abu-Mazin" was the one who concluded the Oslo agreement. Why is he not participating in the Authority?

['Usfur] He is a PA citizen, has taken out a Palestinian identity card, and is living abroad. He is not against coming to the self-rule area but he has some observations about the PA's performance in general.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Are there demands for reforms inside the PA?

[Sha'th] Reform is constantly needed and no one inside the authority claims that our experience was ideal. We are turning a revolution that was in exile abroad into a real government with almost the same personnel, and this process needs time.

[Dr. Qassis] The problem is that the agreement has not solved the issue of the return of the Palestinians from abroad. It might be possible to solve it in the future, but this requires that the PLO stay abroad to play its role in this issue.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why are members of the negotiating delegation being constantly changed? Does not this reflect some sort of a confused vision?

[Sha'th] Change is possible when there are different tasks and a need for a new experience. Change for the sake of change creates a state of discontinuity, especially when there is a negotiating plan that should be clear to those involved in it.

Most of our negotiating members are continuing to do so. The only exception was in Oslo, because it was a secret operation and no one knew about it. Hasan 'Usfur was the only one who was in the Oslo delegation and with us in Washington.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Don't you think that there is flexibility about the peace process among the Israelis?

[Qassis] There is really a clear change. The present government has a number of ministers who support Palestinian rights as we see it. But this government might change because it has a small majority. There are many Israelis who are demanding things that are inimical to what the present government is proposing.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What are Israel's excuses now for not withdrawing from the West Bank as the agreement stipulates?

[Sha'th] They use the excuse of security; and if the problem in Gaza is difficult then it would be more

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difficult in the West Bank. The Oslo agreement sets a timetable for withdrawal that should be complied with.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What specifically are Israel's security demands?

[Sha'th] Israel has been monitoring the violent acts that have occurred, including the Tel Aviv bus bombing, the abduction of an Israeli soldier, and some other operations. It believes that the peace process has not brought it the security it desired. If maintaining security in the West Bank proves more difficult than in Gaza, Israel will not withdraw.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is your response to this argument?

[Sha'th] We are responsible for security only in the self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho. We are not responsible for security in the settlements, the West Bank, or Israel proper. Additionally, the agreement has a specific timetable. If Israel does not withdraw, it will be violating the agreement.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why does Israel lay responsibility for the Tel Aviv bus bombing at your door?

[Sha'th] It believes that Hamas planned that operation and since Hamas members move about freely in Gaza, it wants us to put them on trial. Israel wants us to confiscate the weapons from the citizens. This means making house-to-house searches, as Israel used to do. We draw the line between confiscating weapons and banning the carrying of arms in public. We can reach political agreement with all the factions to ban the public carrying of arms in public. We must not forget that no government in the world can face outlaws without deterrent power. But we do not have tear gas grenades and our police do not carry batons. They have only their sidearms. We will not open fire on Palestinians.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Why hasn't Israel evacuated the Gaza settlements?

[Sha'th] Before we took over, there were 300 settlements, with settlers actually living in only 25 percent of them. Most settlers then left voluntarily and returned to Israel. Rabin does not want to dismantle Gaza's settlements in order not to create a precedent for dismantling the West Bank settlements.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is the current position regarding the West Bank settlements?

[Sha'th] The situation is painful. When the Camp David accord was signed, there were 6,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. Now there are approximately 120,000 settlers in the West Bank alone. Likud governments, particularly in the days of Begin and Sharon, were in a race against time to build as many settlements as possible. During the Likud era the number of settlers reached 271,000. Actually only the peace process halted the settlement drive. Had settlement building activity continued, the settlements would have doubled in the four [as published] years since the Madrid conference began. It is enough to look at the settlements built around Jerusalem itself to see that they are like the Great Wall of China.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is the Israeli view of the settlements?

[Sha'th] There are settlements in the Bethlehem and Ramallah areas that are intertwined with Palestinian villages and are not linked by direct roads to Israel. Their residents have to pass through the Palestinian villages. The Israelis are saying that they cannot abandon these settlements. There is another view, first advocated by [former foreign minister] Abba Eban, that says that there is no point in clinging to details and minor issues, and if Israel is going to evacuate these settlements eventually, why not evacuate them now and expedite a final political solution. The peace advocates are calling for such a move.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What position will Israel take, in your opinion?

[Sha'th] They are in a quandary because the peace argument is not only a Palestinian argument but the argument of the Middle East market and the Casablanca conference. Israeli gains from peace can greatly exceed its gains from a state of no war, no peace. Israel's economic growth rate was 8 percent last year and is expected to reach 14 percent, like China's, this year. The annual number of tourists visiting Israel doubled from 1.2 million to 2.4 million after the Madrid conference. It is expected to reach 3 million this year.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] As a Palestinian and a negotiator, do you prefer to reach a final settlement directly or to make progress step by step?

[Sha'th] At the beginning I used to prefer to move directly to the final solution, but the situation has now changed. Current Israeli, Arab, and international circumstances do not permit the return of Jerusalem. There is no Arab power that can support such a demand by us. For this reason I advocate insistence on withdrawal from the West Bank first, in line with the agreement's provisions and the set timetable. There are factors at the negotiating table that determine the course of the negotiations and there are also external factors.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What factors affect the negotiations at the negotiating table?

[Sha'th] These include the negotiators' dexterity and their understanding of the documents at hand and the importance of the time factor. External factors include the strengths of each negotiating party, its domestic situation, domestic support for the peace process, Arab support, and the international situation. An important factor is on our side, namely Israel's wish to continue its process of political and economic stability and its desire to get the lion's share of the prospective Middle East market. It wants to guarantee a modicum of security for

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its citizens. Most of them are not holocaust survivors now and are not haunted by holocaust memories. They were born within the past 30 years and want to live in peace. These form a substantial part of the Israeli public. Regrettably our strengths are actually the weaknesses in the Israeli position. Other factors that can give us strength are the attitudes of the Arab and Islamic blocs and the world at large. Not all of these groups support us. Egypt is the only country whose government supports us on the official, political, and media levels. It is the only country whose leadership backs the just Palestinian negotiating demands and is trying to mobilize international support for them.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] What is the Palestinian side's stand on the Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian towns, the redeployment issue; and what have the Israelis offered in this regard?

[Al-Razzaq] So far they have offered nothing regarding redeployment. So far they have not submitted any views on paper or during negotiations. In the past when we started the Gaza- Jericho talks, both the Israeli and Palestinian sides submitted papers containing their views.

Regarding the West Bank, the Palestinian and Israeli sides are supposed to submit similar papers and to agree on the security concept during this phase. The security concept is directly linked to redeployment. We have studied the subject and formulated our own concept. At the Brussels meetings a committee was formed, called the Concept Committee. At a meeting last Wednesday [14 December], the Israeli side told us that the government had not yet decided what it wants in this phase. They only submitted "negative lessons" that obstruct and hinder redeployment.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Will the settlers on the West Bank do what the settlers in Gaza have done?

[Al-Razzaq] There were pressing security and psychological circumstances in Gaza which pushed the settlers to leave the settlements voluntarily. The circumstances in the West Bank are different, even though the Israelis believe that some settlements must be dismantled for security reasons.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] How many?

[Sha'th] About 60 settlements.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Therefore, there are two issues now—the settlements and the establishment of a Palestinian state?

[Al-Razzaq] Yes, our constant goal is the establishment of a Palestinian state. I do not know precisely what Israeli political thinking is regarding this issue, but it is clear that they are obstructing self-rule, which is a first step toward building a state. The Israeli stand is still fluid in this regard.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] Fluid or concealed?

[Al-Razzaq] Both.

[Sha'th] And confused as well. Those who say that the Israelis have improved their stand on the Palestinian state do not understand politics very well.

[AL-MUSAWWAR] We thank the members of the Palestinian negotiation team.

Sha'th Views Aid to PA, Palestinian Economy

JN1412174094 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 10 Dec 94 p 16

[Interview with Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international relations in the Palestinian Authority, by Isma'il Zayir in Brussels; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Zayir] Can you put a figure on the amount of aid you are expecting?

[Sha'th] The money we have received is intended for the time from now until the end of March 1995. It will go toward the Palestinian Authority's [PA] current expenses, including education and health in the West Bank, and the cost of institution building in Gaza and Jericho, and pay for Palestinian police personnel. It is being estimated at $125 million, of which $102 million has been raised. Another $25 million, which I think will be forthcoming in the course of the coming week, was promised by certain countries.

Twenty-three million dollars has been raised for infrastructure projects in Gaza. These will create no fewer than 5,000 job opportunities. Other funds have been pledged and these should provide another 10,000 jobs and finance infrastructure projects in Gaza, particularly in the areas of water, sewage, road networks, and electricity.

Yesterday a $58 million loan agreement was signed with the World Bank. The money will finance long-term rather than short-term infrastructure plans. These sums add up to close to $180 million.

[Zayir] How accommodating has Israel proved to economic development in the Palestinian areas? Can you report any progress in Israel's position?

[Sha'th] The closure of the Gaza Strip alone costs $3 million daily in lost labor income; a one-month closure works out at $90 million; a 45-day closure would equal all the aid money pledged by the donor nations. This is not to mention the far higher costs born as a consequence of the ban on Gaza exports, the cutoff in tourism to Gaza, and the disruption in the fishing trade. These measures take their toll on investor confidence. Thus, the closure is the most to blame for strangulating the Palestinian economy. The situation is hardly helped by unfulfilled promises of international aid.

At the ongoing Brussels conference, the Israelis promised they will henceforth not impose a ban on the export of Palestinian goods, tourism, or investments, but they

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stopped short of labor. They tied the import of Palestinian labor in with security. Naturally, we do not want long-term dependence on the Israeli labor market. We aspire to an industrialized economy that can absorb Palestinian labor. We also have an interest in infrastructure projects; these would open up job opportunities and thereby curtail our economy's reliance on the export of Palestinian labor. If the Israelis live up to their promises on uninterrupted access of Palestinian goods to their markets and on tourism and investment, that will be heartening. [passage omitted]

Sha'th: Israelis Refuse To Hand Over Hamas Bodies

NC2012191894 Paris AFP in English 1655 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Dec 20 (AFP)—Palestinian chief negotiator Nabil Sha'th on Tuesday [20 December] charged Israel with refusing to hand over the bodies of two Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] militants, killed during anti-Israeli operations more than two months ago.

"We reject the political provocation inherent in this matter," said Sha'th, who is also planning "minister" in the Palestinian self-rule authority.

"We would like to conclude this matter as soon as possible so that it is not added to the series of problems which delay the peace process."

Sha'th's comments come on the eve of a scheduled meeting between PLO chief Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres aimed at breaking a deadlock in talks on extending Palestinian autonomy.

Sha'th also hinted that Israel was holding the bodies as ransom for the remains of Ilan Saadun, an Israeli soldier kidnapped and killed by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) about four years ago.

"The Israeli authorities know well that (President) 'Arafat has done and is doing his best to return Israeli bodies without linking them to Palestinian bodies," Sha'th said in a statement sent to news agencies.

There was no mention of any Israeli official demand for the body of Saadun in return for those of militants Salah Jadallah and Hasan 'Abbas, both Gaza residents.

Jadallah was one of the Hamas kidnappers of Israeli soldier Corporal Nachshon Waksman, and was killed in a raid on their hideout on October 14.

'Abbas was killed when Israeli police shot him and another Palestinian as they sprayed gunfire in a Jerusalem street on October 9.

The Arabic daily AL-QUDS on Tuesday reported Israeli security sources as saying Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin had decided to withhold the bodies.

Saadun's sister praised the decision and asked Rabin not to hand over any Hamas remains until the group provided information on Saadun.

Meanwhile, Hamas leader 'Imad Faluji said Israel had yet to reply to the group's offer two months ago of Saadun's body in return for the liberation of Palestinian prisoners including Hamas spiritual guide Shaykh Ahmad Yasin.

'Abd Rabbuh Says 'No Peace' if DOP Not Observed

JN2012184994 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Information and Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh has said that Israel is trying to renounce the Declaration of Principles [DOP] on security pretexts.

'Abd-Rabbuh added that these practices would halt the peace process. He cast doubt on Israel's intentions on the eve of tomorrow's expected meeting between President 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. 'Abd-Rabbuh said:

[Begin recording] ['Abd-Rabbuh] The most important issue for us is to implement the DOP. This implementation means a confirmation of commitment to the peace process, and to the next step which should include the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from all the populated areas to enable the Palestinian Authority to spread its territorial jurisdiction over the Palestinian territories in the West Bank.

[Unidentified correspondent] What sort of jurisdiction would this be if the Israelis seek to fragment the West bank into islands?

['Abd-Rabbuh] In our opinion, this is the most serious current issue, in addition to the expansion of settlements in and around Jerusalem and in a number of other settlements. Any attempt to alter the major element in the agreement; namely, the comprehensive territorial jurisdiction means a destruction of the entire agreement. For example, the issue of elections for us is a political issue. The withdrawal of the Israeli Army is not for elections, but to enable the Authority to establish its territorial jurisdiction. The elections issue is an internal political measure. Consequently, the withdrawal of the army must be final and within the framework of the agreement which has been reached, in which the issue of territorial jurisdiction and the territorial integrity of the West Bank, Gaza, and all the Palestinian territories is the major element.

[Correspondent] Have you informed the cosponsors of the Israeli attempts to evade implementation of the agreement?

['Abd-Rabbuh] Certainly, and this issue has taken place following the meeting which was held between the

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Authority's Council of Ministers and the Higher Negotiations Committee. The cosponsors and the Israeli side itself were informed that such attempts to undermine the DOP and to devoid it of its contents will have very serious results on the overall peace process. What we have agreed upon stipulates that we begin practical arrangements to withdraw the Israeli Army from all the Palestinian territories, not from part of them or from scattered spots here and there. We do not want the Jericho example, which was a preliminary and temporary example, to be the basis for the withdrawal of the Israeli Army. The withdrawal should take place to specified points outside the populated areas as the first step, and after the elections to agreed upon specified points on the Palestinian territory.

[Correspondent] Do you expect a solution to this problem during tomorrow's meeting between President Yasir 'Arafat and Shim'on Peres?

['Abd-Rabbuh] We will see how the Israeli intentions and stands will be. However, there can be no compromise solutions regarding this clear concept which is included in the agreement. We believe that thus far, the Israeli stand has not been reassuring, and that it poses threats to the entire agreement.

[Correspondent] What are the dangers of Israel's evasion of the peace obligations?

['Abd-Rabbuh] In this case, there will be no peace agreement. Consequently, Israel will be responsible for such results. This will reflect negatively, not only on the Palestinians and Israelis, but also on the entire region.

[Correspondent] Thank you Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, information and culture minister in the National Authority. [end recording]

Kanafani Views Israeli Position on Elections

JN2012214494 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1730 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Marwan Kanafani, adviser to Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority, and 'Arafat's official spokesman, in Gaza, by radio correspondent Salah Salamah, in the studio; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Salamah] Mr. Marwan Kanafani: As you know, Israel is trying to convince the Palestinians to hold the elections under its military presence in the occupied West Bank towns. Is there any Palestinian response to this Israeli position?

[Kanafani] As I previously said, all the fancy proposals aimed to effect things prematurely can only be acceptable if they are made within the framework of the agreement which calls for redeployment, so elections can be held and the Israeli forces can later withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories.

Implementing parts of the agreement away from the overall sequence of the agreement's mechanism—which will ultimately implement the land-for-peace principle—may not be useful now, and the Palestinians do not accept it.

[Salamah] The Israeli military command says the Israeli Army's withdrawal from the occupied West Bank towns will lead to chaos and will endanger the lives of 120,000 Israeli settlers. This confirms remarks made by the Israeli political leadership that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has not yet eliminated acts of violence and that the Palestinians are not prepared to assume responsibility for security affairs. What is the Palestinian reply to these Israeli remarks?

[Kanafani] The Palestinian reply is clear. These remarks were also made before we entered Gaza in May. However, all these accusations are untrue, and the things the Israelis have talked about have not taken place. Gaza is now more secure, or at least, as secure as any other city in the region. In Gaza, people go to work amid the security and safety provided by the Palestinian National Authority [PNA]. The fears of the PNA's extension to the larger portion of the Palestinian territories have no room in this region's brief history since the PNA assumed its duties.

Here is Gaza, incidents have not outnumbered similar incidents in any other regional town. Some security incidents emanated from the failure to implement the agreement and not from implementing this agreement. The PA is committed to all its duties as a result of this agreement. Foremost among these duties is to secure the life, freedom, and property of the Palestinian citizens in the Palestinian territories. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Sets Up Agency To Supervise Banks

TA2012164694 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 20 Dec 94 p 4

[Report by 'Ala' al-Mashahrawi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza—President Yasir 'Arafat decided to set up an agency to supervise banks inside the Palestinian National Authority's area. He made this decision in the wake of the banks' aggressive campaign throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where they have opened many branches in the wake of the deployment of the Palestinian police forces. President 'Arafat appointed Dr. Amin Haddad, an economic expert in the Ministry of Finance, as banks supervisor. He will form a committee to fulfill this new task. [passage omitted]

Fatah Wins All Seats on University Student Council

TA2012192694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In elections at al-Azhar University in the Gaza Strip, Fatah has won all nine seats on the

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student council. Candidates for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine also ran in the elections.

'Arafat Receives Newly Elected Council

JN2112072594 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority, yesterday received the newly elected al-Azhar University student council, the university's staff, and many of its students.

President 'Arafat congratulated the elected student council, emphasizing the need to abide by national unity and democracy. He wished al-Azhar University staff and students progress and prosperity.

One of the elected student council members delivered a speech in which he pledged that the youth movement will continue to seriously work to serve the homeland and the university until the establishment of the independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The student youth movement had won all nine seats on the student council with an overwhelming majority.

PFLP-GC Claims Credit for Operation

JN2012211394 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Statement by a military spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberations of Palestine-General Command, PFLP-GC; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the popular intifadah in Palestine entering its eighth year, challenging all the attempts to contain or destroy it, out of commitment to armed struggle and resistance as a major path to liberate Palestine, and as a policy against the liquidatory and capitulatory plans, and for the sake of confirming the heroic cohesion with the heroes of the Islamic and nationalist resistance in southern Lebanon, a group of the fighters of the Gaza massacre's martyrs has ambushed a mechanized Zionist patrol on the road linking the towns of Markaba and Tallusah in the occupied strip area.

At 0800 yesterday, Monday, 19 December 1994, and when the Zionist patrol approached the ambush site, the group's heroes pounced on it and showered it with rockets and machine gun fire, destroying a Merkava tank and killing its crew. The tank was seen exploding with flames billowing from it. The Zionist army radio admitted the operation and its results. The men of the attacking group and the protection group returned safely to base. The Zionist enemy's artillery combed the forests surrounding the area. The helicopters have also participated in the unsuccessful combing operation.

A pledge to the heroes of the popular intifadah in Palestine and the valiant resistance in southern Lebanon to keep the flag of jihad fluttering high and to pursue the revolution until the liberation of land and man.

[Signed] The PFLP-GC

Hamas Political Bureau Member al-'Alami Interviewed

MM1912123694 London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic Dec 94 pp 22-23

[Interview with 'Imad al-'Alami, member of the Hamas Political Bureau, by Yasir al-Za'atirah; place and date not given: "This Is Not the First Time Rabin Has Declared War on Us"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The occupation authorities, with the self-rule Authority behind them, are still persisting with their pursuit of the Islamic Resistance Movement [Hamas] because of its insistence on continuing its holy war and on escalating its operations. To find out the position and views of Hamas and its preparations to face up to these developments, FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH held this interview with 'Imad al-'Alami, member of the Hamas Political Bureau.

[Al-Za'atirah] In the light of Yasir 'Arafat's pledge to U.S. President Clinton to strike at Hamas, the events at Bir Nabala and 'Arafat's help to the Israelis, the Tel Aviv operation, the continued arrests of Hamas members—in the light of all that, how do you view the future of relations between the movement and the Palestinian Authority?

[Al-'Alami] Firstly: The Palestinian Authority is the by-product of the Gaza-Jericho Accord, which handed recognition to the usurping enemy in the land of Palestine and bestowed legitimacy on its occupation in 1948 of our land, the West Bank and large parts of Gaza, and all that without the Palestinian Authority gaining any sovereignty over a single speck of the soil of Palestine. The movement has categorically and openly rejected this accord because of what it represents, namely a violation of the constant principles of our Palestinian people and usurpation of the rights of our Arab and Muslim nation in this blessed holy land.

Secondly: If we look at the Palestinian Authority, we find it to be a structure of organs and institutions with divergent political dimensions. There is the police institution, the administrative and services institutions such as health and education and the municipalities, and finally there are the political institutions of the Authority represented by the current Council of the Authority which is led by Yasir 'Arafat. This is in addition to the institutions which are currently under discussion.

Thirdly: The Authority's institutions and machinery consist of the sons of this people be they those who served in the Liberation Army all their lives and those who were abroad as well as those who were inside [the

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occupied territories] and joined in and the officials who were working in these institutions and departments prior to the creation of the Authority.

All this explains the brotherly cooperation the Palestinian police have had on their arrival, because they consisted of sons of the Palestinian people and, therefore, their task should be to protect the Palestinian people. So the movement was extremely anxious not to clash with them in accordance with its mission of serving this people. As to the administrative and services institutions, all members of the Palestinian people should take part in them in accordance with their capabilities and in a manner that leads to the improvement of living conditions and the avoidance of factional practices in these institutions' performance of their tasks.

As to our position toward the political institutions of the Authority, it is clear, namely, that we do not recognize it nor do we recognize any representative character bestowed on it by the accords reached with the enemy, and the Movement shall not participate in them nor take part in any elections leading to the formation of these institutions.

It is probably evident that this vision of the relationship between the movement and the Authority has succeeded in overcoming many hot points. Despite the Authority's condemned acceptance of the repeated dictates of the enemy and its sacrifice of the blood of our strugglers in the Bir Nabala operation in return for a pardon from Clinton to this Authority, the movement is also capable of surmounting any obstacles in the future. But if the Authority persists in its efforts to please Rabin at the expense of the blood of our people, it will be committing a grave mistake. The popular rally around the movement, which manifested itself on more than one occasion in the Strip, particularly following the Palestine massacre, provides a true pointer to the movement's ability to face up to all new developments.

[Al-Za'atirah] There was a conflict within the circles of the Palestinian Authority and specifically Fatah on the path to be adopted in dealing with Hamas. There were varied views in this regard. How do you view this matter? Is there any cooperation between you and the elements that are anxious to preserve national unity in the Authority and in Fatah?

[Al-'Alami] The movement has always viewed national unity as the most important element of power against the occupation and consequently it should not be subjected to narrow calculations. This was evident in the blessed Intifadah. For national unity to be realized, all the national elements should shoulder their responsibilities and should strike at the hands of anyone who tries to harm national unity.

Here lies the problem of the situation within the Authority and Fatah in that there are numerous currents existing within their bodies due either to their alignment with this or that regional force or due to the diversity of fields from which they came such as the (Palestine) Liberation Army [PLA], the security machinery, and the PLO's administrative corps, or also to diversity of their organizational backgrounds: the Youth, the [Fatah] Hawks, the military apparatus, the western sector. But perhaps the most dangerous is the diversity of views over the various calculations concerning the future settlement, which has begun to crystallize now within the Authority in the form of a Zionist current which placed its bets on the enemy and see the establishment of a confederation with him and the consecration of attachment and subservience to him in all fields as the most important feature of the final solution. This current is ready to neglect all our people's values and strike at our people's national unity just to please Rabin and Peres and guarantee a seat for it in the final stage.

In spite of all that, there are still numerous elements who are anxious to safeguard national unity within the Authority's ranks, such as the police and Fatah. The movement is working hard to cooperate with such elements. In this regard, let us not forget the assassination of our brother martyr Yusri al- Hamas, who was killed by the begrudged protective security because of his anxiousness to safeguard the unity of our people .

Furthermore, the movement has been anxious to continue its dialogue with some of the brothers in Fatah, particularly those who had been in prisons and concentration camps and who were brought together with many of our movement's brothers by suffering, in order to strengthen the counter-current against the pro-Zionist current, for the sake of the preservation of the unity of this people and its chaste blood which should be confined only to the road of holy war and martyrdom.

[Al-Za'atirah] Following the Bir Nabala and Tel Aviv operations, General Rabin and his command declared an all-out war, the details of which have not been fully disclosed yet, against Hamas. How do you view this declaration, particularly with regard to the possibility of transferring the battle to outside the Palestinian land by striking at the symbols of Hamas there? What is your reply to that?

[Al-'Alami] This is not the first war Rabin has declared against the movement. The enemy commanders have accustomed us to the declaration of wars against us after every heroic operation carried out by the Al-Qassam strugglers. This is because these operations undermine the most important basis in the Jewish mentality for the establishment of the Zionist entity, namely, security, so that this entity would provide a safe haven for them under the pretext of European persecution of them, and [the pretext that] they are the people most anxious to secure a life—any life.

If we were to look to the martyr operations that followed the al- Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, we would readily see the extent of the panic and fright which reigned over Zionist society. So it was necessary to restore reassurance to Zionist society through the issuing of threats. But

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thanks to God's support and care, the movement has always succeeded in overcoming all the past measures and managed to deal one blow after another to the occupation and its soldiers.

As to the new development in these threats, namely, the striking against the movement's elements abroad, the movement did not adopt its policy of not carrying out any military operations abroad out of any impotence on its part or any lack of faithful youth, who are waiting here and there and whose hearts abound with the love of martyrdom and who are eager to fight in the cause of God and Palestine. Its decision stemmed from its realization and comprehension of the experience of the Palestinian revolution, and after careful consideration it engaged in battle in the land of Palestine. But if Rabin wishes now to transfer the battle abroad, there is no doubt whatsoever that he will be the loser. He must also realize that the Muslim youth who went to fight in Afghanistan and elsewhere will be more eager to avenge their struggler brothers in Palestine.

[Al-Za'atirah] At the time when the all-out war was declared against Hamas, calls were made by some senior Israelis for a dialogue with the so-called moderate Hamas elements following certain statements by some elements from within the movement on the inside. Although Rabin and Peres have rejected these calls, the matter deserves some comment from you.

[Al-'Alami] Firstly, I must remind you that our strugglers of the 'Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam squads distributed a statement, following the Al-'Affulah and Al-Khudayrah operations, in which they spoke of their right to deal with the enemy as the enemy deals with them and thus avenge the martyrs of the al-Ibrahim Mosque massacre. Yet they declared in their statement, from a position of strength, that they are ready to stop the killing of civilians provided the enemy would also stop the killing of the unarmed sons of our people who are living under occupation. They reiterated the same thing following the Tel Aviv operation.

Anyone who follows the statements made by the leaders of the enemy about the dialogue cannot but note the following:

1) These statements were made at a time when the enemy commanders admitted the failure of the army and the security machinery to face up to the martyrdom spirit of our strugglers.

2) The enemy's repeated attempts to divide the PLO into moderates and hard-liners with a view to creating a rift within it have enabled him to negotiate with the settlement current afterwards.

3) Rabin's resorting to his favorite ploy of using the policy of the stick and the carrot: While he threatens and declares war, he leaves it to others to talk about dialogue.

As far as I am concerned, my vision is clear and is unaffected by moderation or a hard-line approach. There can be no talk about recognition of the usurping entity over the land of Palestine nor the halting of the blessed course of the holy war until the liberation of the land which God has blessed and the land around it. For this reason, nobody in the movement has spoken about the dialogue in the form understood by the enemy and talked about by some of his officials. But in spite of that, the movement has never ignored the human element in its struggle with the Zionist enemy, and this was evident in its handling of the case of the kidnapped soldier.

[Al-Za'atirah] The American escalation against Hamas has never been of the intensity it reached following the Bir Nabala and Tel Aviv operations, particularly in regard to the drying up of sources of finance to the movement and the bringing of pressure to bear on the countries which provide shelter to Hamas or its elements. How do you view this attitude and what is your reply to it?

[Al-'Alami] Clinton has gone far in his support for the enemy state. This was evident in his speech at the Knesset in which he attached a religious emotional dimension to his support when he mentioned that his priest had told him that one day he will become president of the United States. All of us also remember how Secretary of State Christopher cut short the agenda of his talks with the countries he was visiting following the Bir Nabala and Tel Aviv operations to talk about Hamas and repeat what his master had said earlier about the need to dry up the sources of finance for the movement and to tighten things around it and around its elements. This is due to the Clinton administration's subservience to the Jewish lobby and its submission to it in a manner never seen before from any of the successive U.S. administrations. This is in addition to the American eagerness to complete the settlement, an attitude which will harm Washington in the long run. This is because: Firstly, the future shall be for the Islamic forces, as evidenced by the events on the ground; secondly, the future does not favor a fantasy settlement, although some Palestinians had allowed themselves to sink deeper and deeper in committing this sin which is based on the establishment of the Israeli usurpation of more than 87 percent of the land of Palestine including the city of the night journey of God's Prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation; and thirdly, we are confident that God will grant his support to his faithful strugglers.

[Al-Za'atirah] Do you think that some countries will respond to the Israeli pressures, and has anything of this sort happened so far? How big would the effects of such measures on the movement be if they were to happen in the future, particularly with the growing speed of treaties and normalization between the Arab countries and the Zionist entity?

[Al-'Alami] From the start, our policy was based on noninterference in the affairs of the countries in which there are elements of the movement, nor those in which it has offices and varied activities. We have not taken

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sides in any formula or conflict among these countries. Our conflict has always been with the enemy and the enemy alone. For this reason, so far, our existence in any of the various areas has suffered no effects despite the ferocious American attacks and Rabin's repeated pressures. It should be noted that our movement relies on the masses' rallying around it. Furthermore, many of the sons of the Arab and Islamic peoples have been extending helping hands to their brothers inside the occupied territory. Muslims everywhere worship God by offering alms of their money as well as any other contributions to their brethren. Many of them believe that those steadfast in the Holy City and the surrounding areas are the most worthy of such alms and contributions.

Perhaps what limits the effect of these pressures on the movement is that it is undisciplinable. We have no armies in these places nor do we have institutions or armies of officials so as to constitute an element of pressure on us to find accommodation for them. Furthermore, our reliance on the Arab and Islamic peoples makes it difficult for governments to confiscate the love and sympathy of these peoples for us.

[Al-Za'atirah] What role can Hamas play in instigating the Arab and Islamic scene to continue its opposition to the Zionist plan which has begun to invade the entire region?

[Al-'Alami] The movement has come to realize the enormity of the responsibility laid upon its shoulders, and it is marching in the forefront of the Islamic cultural plan against the Zionist plan which has now moved from the phase of normalization and extended its octopus tentacles to become the dominant regional force in the heart of the Arab and Islamic world and has been assuming the role of confrontation with Islam following the collapse of Communism.

The movement has entered the confrontation against the Zionist plan in all its dimensions through the armed struggle on the soil of Palestine or through its cultural, ideological and humanitarian dimension on the Arab and Islamic arena by keeping the flame of the resistance and holy war alight, by facing up to normalization with the enemy in all its forms, by keeping the fire of enmity for the Zionist enemy raging in the hearts of the nation whatever treaties have been concluded with him, and by keeping the Palestine question alive in the hearts of our Islamic and Arab nation.

All of us are aware how the antireligious tide has receded, after it failed to preserve Palestine. Today, the challenge facing the Islamic people and the Islamic movements and forces is even much bigger. Hamas will work hard to convey the message. The Islamism of Palestine means that Palestine with its sea, its river, its Jerusalem, its Jaffa and its Strip and [West] Bank as well as every particle of its soil are Islamic trust property and it is a trust which should be preserved by every Arab and Muslim.

[Following the interview, the following editorial comment is carried in a separate box]

Comment on the Massacre

The above interview was conducted before the sad Friday, hence it became necessary to publish this followup.

1. It is saddening indeed to see the Palestinian Authority succumb to the threats of Rabin and Mordekhey Gur in such an abominable manner and commit a sin which Rabin himself did not dare commit. The Palestinian people wherever they were have expressed their rejection of this barbaric method. The angry masses swarmed into the street in the proud Strip to warn all those who contemplate the confiscation of their freedom and dignity. Our people in the Bank have also expressed their wrath by escalating the tone of the Intifadah. This cause of the masses affirms to everyone that what has happened was not between us and the Authority. The confrontation is between the Authority on the one hand and the entire Palestinian people on the other. The Palestinian people will not accept the shedding of Palestinian blood. Their memories are full of examples of internecine fights pitting one Palestinian against another Palestinian in Lebanon. The Palestinian Authority must fully understand the lesson and respond to the will of the people.

2. The Authority has proven its failure firstly in dealing with our people by making the security and police apparatuses control daily life in Gaza and Jericho, so much so that the situation amounted to nothing more than the replacement of the occupation army authority by a military authority, performing the same way and having the same commitments: to protect the Zionist entity and safeguard the security of the soldiers and settlers in the Strip.

It has proved its failure secondly when it allowed itself to shed the blood of their brothers, the sons of our people. Hence the Palestinian Authority must shoulder full responsibility for the painful Friday massacre, foremost of which is Abu-'Ammar ['Arafat]. Despite the ugliness of the massacre, we continue to affirm our eagerness to rise above the crisis and to safeguard national unity, provided that this should be based on the following:

1. Our people's right to express their views freely is an inalienable holy right.

2. All national prisoners be released. Our people will not accept to have people imprisoned, having suffered much from the prisons of occupation.

3. All the elements of the sedition who permitted themselves to kill our people and shed their pure blood must be brought to trial.

4. An elected civilian leadership must be formed to take control of things, provide security and safety for our

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people, and deliver them from the current stifling conditions in which they are living on all levels, without interference from the Zionist enemy.

Text of Hamas Communique No 117

MM1912130894 London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic Dec 94 p 7

[Text of Hamas Communique No. 117: "Our People Reject Capitulationist Treaties and Adhere to the Option of Holy War and Resistance"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Resistance Movement [Hamas] has denounced the normalization steps taken by some of the Arab countries and the American pro-Zionist enemy stance and affirmed its determination to continue with the option of holy struggle and resistance. The communique says:

Our struggling Palestinian people; masses of our Arab and Islamic nation:

Day after day, our heroic Palestinian people have been affirming their trust in the option of holy struggle and resistance and their ability to give and offer sacrifices and to set magnificent examples of legendary heroism, martyrdom, and redemption in fighting the usurping enemy who possesses all means of force and tools of suppression.

The Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, who are confident of God's support and their ability to exercise their legitimate natural right of struggle and resistance against the invaders, have been penetrating all the strong security barriers set up by the Zionist enemy, to get to the heart of our Palestinian land in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Bir Nabala and to carry out successive bold heroic operations which have shaken the foundation of the Zionist entity and affirmed to Rabin as well as to all the Zionists that all the precautions and measures they brag about and which they thought would guard and protect them from the blows of our heroes and strugglers and all the agreements they barricaded themselves behind and all the campaigns of pursuit and hounding they conduct, cannot prevent our strugglers from continuing their resistance and just struggle against the occupation and its objectives .

The operations carried out by the Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigade heroes in the depth of the areas under Zionist control affirm, at the same time, our people's ability and determination to continue with their strategic option of struggle and resistance. They also refute the allegations of the submissive capitulationists, who try to justify their weakness and defeat by claiming their inability to continue the struggle.

Greetings to the Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigade heroes who gave the Zionist enemy a taste of the bitterness which our people suffer at the hands of the occupation authorities. Greetings to the heroic martyr Salih 'Abd Al-Rahim Suway, the hero of the Tel Aviv martyr operation. Greetings also to the martyr of Palestine and Egypt, the hero 'Isam Al-Jawhari who has proven by his martyrdom over the blessed land of Palestine, the unity of the Muslim blood and the strength of the bond which the Arab and Islamic peoples have with the cause of Palestine despite all the plans and conspiracies that are being hatched to isolate our cause and detach it from its Arab and Islamic depth. Greetings to the heroic struggler Yahya 'Ayyash who had become a source of terror and panic arousing fear in the hearts of the Zionists.

Our struggling Palestinian people; all the free men of our Arab and Islamic nation:

The heroic Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigade operations in Jerusalem, Bir Nabala, and Tel Aviv have been a reply to the barbaric practices and continued crimes committed by the occupation authorities against the sons of our people as well as a means to persuade the Rabin Government to release the heroic detainees whom the self-rule Authority had ignored and dropped from its calculations and flimsy accords with the government of the terrorist Rabin.

Instead of responding to the just and humanitarian demands, which have won the sympathy of all the sons of our patient Palestinian people, Rabin and his racist Government, as usual, resorted to treachery and deception and acted in the case of the seized soldier in a manner which exposed to the deceived Arab negotiators, who have placed their trust in Rabin, the nature of treachery, betrayal and violation of pledges and promises that is entrenched in the hearts of the Zionist occupation authorities.

In an attempt to find a way out of its internal crisis and to punish our struggling people and prevent them from dealing blows to Zionist targets, the Rabin government rushed to close the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and issued a flood of threats about waging a campaign of arrests, demolition of houses, imposition of restrictions on the institutions, and threats to assassinate the heroes of Hamas and the strugglers of our people. We wish to affirm to Rabin and his government that their threats do not frighten our people and will not deter them from exercising their legitimate right and that any foolish action Rabin's government might take, such as it did in the case of martyr Hani 'Ayid whom it assassinated in cold blood, will only lead to the intensification of the flame of struggle and resistance until the Zionists are driven out of our land by force.

Sons of our struggling Palestinian people:

At the time when our steadfast people received the news of Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Bridages' heroic operations with joy and overwhelming pleasure, the self-rule Authority, which accepted for itself to serve Zionist interests, acted in a hostile manner which inflamed the feelings of our people and aroused their wrath and denunciation. For although these operations had taken place outside the areas under the control of this brittle administration,

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which is an administration in name only, it was not content with condemning and denouncing these operations with the harshest of words and branding them acts of terrorism, but went further in an abominable total submission to the orders of Rabin and the U.S. Administration to launch a campaign of search and large-scale arrests affecting hundreds of the sons of our struggling Palestinian people. It also provided information which enabled the terrorist Rabin's institutions to find out the place were the Zionist soldier Nahachon Faxman [as transliterated] was hidden at Bir Nabala.

By its actions, which have been denounced and condemned and categorically rejected by our people, the self-rule Authority exposes every passing day the nature of the role entrusted to this it in protecting the occupation and suppressing the strugglers. Our people look with anger at these repressive practices and measures which are no different at all from those of the Zionist enemy.

The self-rule Authority must know that our policy of self-restraint and refraining from replying to its repressive practices was not due to any weakness or inability to respond but stems from our eagerness to safeguard the unity of our people and prevent the diversion of the struggle away from its real course which is against the occupation.

Sons of our steadfast Palestinian people:

While the world ignores the suffering of our Palestinian people, who are being subjected to the most cruel, barbaric, and inhumane practices at the hands of the occupation authorities, who do not hesitate to kill civilian children, old people, and women of our people and who slaughter and massacre our people, as they did at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron; and while the world ignores the Zionist enemy's crimes against unarmed civilians in Southern Lebanon, the U.S. Administration rushes to condemn and denounce the operations carried out by the heroes of our people in reprisal for the Zionist enemy's practices and as an act of self- defense. If the American administration is anxious to save the blood of civilians from being shed, then it should bring pressure to bear on the government of the terrorist Rabin so that it may halt immediately its killing of our children, women, and old people and the slaughtering and massacring of our people. We wish to affirm that the uttering of threats and the description of our movement as terrorist will be of no avail and will not affect our people and our nation.

Sons of our struggling Palestinian people; masses of our Arab and Islamic nation:

At a time when our Palestinian people continue their rejection of and resistance against the occupation, our Arab and Islamic nation has been witnessing a state of collapse and breakdown and rush to normalize relations with the Zionist enemy. The welcoming of Zionist officials in Arab capitals and their participation in economic conferences have become an acceptable matter which arouses no surprise. The Arab sides have started talking about the establishment of joint economic projects with the Zionist enemy following the termination in practice at the Casablanca conference of the boycott that was imposed on the Zionist entity.

While declaring its total rejection of all the normalization steps and all the agreements and treaties concluded with the Zionist enemy, your movement, the Islamic Resistance movement [Hamas], affirms its determination to continue with the option of holy struggle and resistance in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles. It also calls for the following:

Firstly: On the foreign level.

1. The movement denounces the successive normalization steps with the Zionist enemy and warns against the dangers inherent in the suspect conference held at Casablanca in Morocco, which opened up horizons for Zionist economic penetration and domination of the region.

2. The movement considers the signing of the Zionist-Jordanian treaty a new breach of the Arab stand of support for the rights of our people and our nation and a consecration of the legitimacy of the Zionist occupation of the land of Palestine.

3. The movement expresses its denunciation of the American stand, which is biased in favor of the Zionist entity. It calls on the United States to halt its hostile campaign against our struggling movement and to take into consideration the dangerous repressive practices of the occupation authorities against the sons of our Palestinian people.

4. Hamas calls on the movements, forces and the Arab and Islamic masses to denounce the American-Zionist campaign against it and to support the movement by all possible means.

5. The movement offers its deepest condolences to the Egyptian and Jordanian peoples for the victims of the storms and floods and calls for speedy help and aid to the affected areas.

Secondly: On the internal level.

1. The movement solemnly announces to our Palestinian people the martyrdom of 'Siam al-Jawhari and Hasan 'Abbas, the heroes of the Jerusalem operation, as well as the martyrs Salah Jadallah, Taysir al-Natshah, and 'Abd-al-Karim Badr, the martyrs of Bir Nabala operation, and also the martyr Salih 'Abd-al-Rahim Suway, the hero of the Tel-Aviv operation, and calls on all the strike forces to deal more blows to Zionist targets.

2. The movement denounces the practices of the self-rule Authority against our people and calls on it to stop its campaign of arrests and to place national Palestinian interests above Zionist interests and demands.

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3. The movement affirms the need for safeguarding the national unity of our people and the need for dialogue and multiplicity and respect for the freedom and views of others, and not resorting to force among sons of the Palestinian people.

4. The movement calls on the self-rule Authority to embark on serious projects that would absorb our heroic workers and thus put an end to their dependence on the occupation.

God is great and victory shall be for the strugglers. Monday 3 Jumada Al-Akhirah 1415 of the Hegira, corresponding to 7 November, 1994 AD.

Hamas Reacts to U.S. Report on Iranian Backing

JN2012153094 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 21 Dec 94 p 8

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on a report [accusing Iran of extending aid to the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas], submitted to the [U.S.] Congress, Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, Hamas spokesman, told AL-BILAD that the language of the report indicates that it emanated from the Jewish lobby. He added that the report came in pursuance of the official efforts of [Yitzhaq] Rabin and [Shim'on] Peres, who are instigating the world against Hamas and calling for besieging it and cutting all its means of support. He said that these reports are baseless and that Hamas has no relations whatsoever with the Iranian Embassy in Amman.

Regarding the report's claim that the Hamas annual budget is up to $35 million, Ghawshah said: These figures are incorrect. I am not aware of the size of the movement's budget. This exaggeration, however, is intended to strike at Hamas. In fact, Hamas budget is very modest, but since it is being administered by mujahid and clean hands it is effective; God blesses it.

On the steps he expects the United States to take against Hamas, Ghawshah said: Such practical steps against Hamas are already in place and some Arab hands are implmenting them. There are attempts to curb support for Hamas and the Islamic Jihad movement. Pressures are being applied to us both in terms of support and even shelter. This is exactly what U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher called for during his last tour of some states, which he explicitly asked to stop supporting Hamas and to deny it shelter.

Ghawshah added: After the Gaza massacre, two phenomena have surfaced. First, no Western state, not even the United States, has condemned the massacre. Second, 'Arafat was supported by $200 million and the massacre was considered an achievement for 'Arafat in a bid to curb the so-called extremist forces.

Ghawshah said that after this support to 'Arafat, he fears that the chairman of the Palestinian Authority would perpetrate new massacres.

Answering a question by AL-BILAD on the same report, Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative in Jordan said: This is not the first time the U.S. Administration and its organs have accused Hamas of receiving financial backing from Iran or other parties. These claims have always been baseless and lacked any logical evidence. While we condemn these accusations against the movement, we ask for the presentation of logical evidence proving that Hamas receives such support. Parties that spread such accusations should pursue a more scientific approach in dealing with and analyzing events. They should not continue to think according to the Zionist mentality, which appears to control their decisionmaking.

Hamas' Nazzal on Dialogue With Israel, 'Arafat

JN2012115694 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 20-26 Dec 94 pp 32, 11

[Interview with Muhammad Nazzal, representative of Hamas in Jordan, by Samih al-Ma'ayitah; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Ma'ayitah] Seven years after the inception of the Hamas movement, how would you evaluate the movement's position, size, and achievements at the political and mass levels inside and outside Palestine, given that these years have witnessed developments, events, and strategic shifts in the course of conflict with the Zionist enemy?

[Nazzal] I can say that during the seven years since the inception of Hamas, the movement has realized great achievements and succeeded in proving that it is an occupation resistance movement that now stands on top of the Palestinian movements inside and outside [the occupied territories].

At the political level, Hamas has submitted a phased political platform represented in the need for a comprehensive Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and holding Palestinian general elections to choose a leadership.

At the practical level, resistance against occupation has developed both in quantity and quality. The military operations in the occupied territories during the past two years clearly demonstrate this development.

At the mass level, Hamas has managed to earn great popularity. The response of the masses to our slogans was translated on the ground. So, it is noted that there is growing popular support for the movement. I cannot give a percentage of this growth because such a percentage needs to be established accurately.

Regarding political relations, the movement has established a wide network of political relations with most of the Arab and Islamic sides. Even at the international level, it has succeeded in realizing a considerable presence. By and large, we can say that Hamas' achievements far exceed its age.

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[Al-Ma'ayitah] The political platform you have talked about, and which envisions a Zionist withdrawal from the West Bank, aroused a great furor among political circles, even Zionist circles, when it was announced in a statement by the Political Bureau and in a press interview with AL-SABIL with Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, head of the bureau. How do you reconcile this phased solution with the movement's political and strategic constants?

[Nazzal] By referring to the movement's phased political platform as an achievement that has been realized, I meant to reply to those who claim that Hamas has no practical and actual platform. If a furor has been made, then it might have been the result of a misunderstanding of some press statements. However, this platform is not recent; it was first presented in 1988. It falls in line with the strategic view of not recognizing the Israeli entity on the land of Palestine.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] The accelerating Arab rapprochement with Israel assuming the form of treaties and relations, along with the war declared against the Islamic movement in Palestine and elsewhere, as well as the Palestinian situation, could isolate Hamas. What will the movement do to confront such possibilities, whether through political or other means?

[Nazzal] Hamas is no longer an organization that represents only a certain factional orientation. On the contrary, it has become a popular movement deeply-rooted not only on the Palestinian level but also on the level of the Arab and Islamic nation. I believe that isolating the movement has become difficult if not impossible. Hamas' persistence with its resistance plan helps it strike stronger roots and reduces the possibility of isolation.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] But the war the United States and the Zionist enemy recently declared represents new factors that entrench isolation and constraint.

[Nazzal] In my assessment, the war began before this declaration. The arrests and constraining campaigns are efforts in this direction that began in 1988 when a law was issued making any affiliation to Hamas a crime publishable by the Israeli law. Praise be to God, the movement entrenched itself on the ground. Whenever the campaigns intensify, the movement is entrenched on the ground.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] The subject of dialogue with the Zionist entity has recently surfaced following media and political signs. Dialogues, that were probably compulsory, have taken place in prisons between some prisoners and Zionist officers. Hamas announced its official position that it accepts dialogue on humanitarian issues on the condition a third party is present. What is the position of the Hamas political leadership on dialogue with the Zionists, especially since it is launching an initiative on a truce in return for full withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and there is a trend in the Zionist entity calling for dialogue with Hamas because 'Arafat does not have all the cards of the Palestinian people?

[Nazzal] Talk about dialogue with Hamas surfaced in the press thanks to the Israeli side, through statements by some Israeli ministers who made these statements with various tones. I do not think that it is accurate to say that this represents an Israeli Government tendency. I think that the subject of dialogue was meant as a test balloon on the one hand, and as a form of pressure on 'Arafat to make more concessions, on the other. Furthermore, Israel used to follow a media policy different from what is taking place on the ground. At a time when they speak about dialogue, a comprehensive campaign to cut the Hamas Movement to size is also going on.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] There are expectations that Shaykh Ahmad Yasin [imprisoned Hamas leader] may be released soon because there is a belief that Shaykh Yasin represents the moderate trend in the movement and that he may pressure the movement toward dialogue.

[Nazzal] The talk about trends within Hamas is incorrect. If Shaykh Yasin is freed from prison, he will be in harmony with the general trend in the movement, with which Shaykh Yasin does not differ in essence.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] Since 'Arafat entered Gaza, there has been a boycott on political dialogue with him. I do not mean the casual or daily dialogue, but the deep dialogue on the whole stage. I know that there are discussions with those who are below 'Arafat, but it is known that the setup of the Palestinian Authority and the Fatah Movement puts the whole authority in 'Arafat's hands. There is no real value in any dialogue with those who are below 'Arafat. Is the practical boycott on dialogue going on, or are there steps toward conducting dialogue?

[Nazzal] What you said about the worthlessness of dialogue with the authority without addressing Yasir 'Arafat is correct. 'Arafat is the only decisionmaker and there is no value in talking with those around him. Nevertheless, dialogue with 'Arafat has no political common ground because he is based on a political platform that totally conflicts with our political platform. According to the letters of recognition 'Arafat exchanged with Israel, he pledged to protect Israel and he has to safeguard Israeli security. The practical application of 'Arafat's authority over the past few months proved this. Nevertheless, we are not against dialogue with the authority in principle, and dialogues have been held.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] With 'Arafat?

[Nazzal] With 'Arafat and others. We have not severed contacts, but the problem is that, based on our experience and that of many others, 'Arafat wants the dialogue to enhance his political position and does not want to reach results that would advance the national cause. He views the dialogue as a means to enhance his position and he tackles the national cause as if it is a bargain. Some opposition factions may have agreed to deal with this in the past, but Hamas refuses this approach. Therefore, we are not against dialogue with the authority but

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we have doubts about the possibility of reaching positive results because the other side, namely 'Arafat, does not want to reach such results.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] Do you mean that the conflicting political concepts negate the possibility of real dialogue with the authority and its president?

[Nazzal] Political differences dot no mean there are no contacts.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] I am not speaking about contacts but about the dialogue and negotiations 'Arafat sought in the past?

[Nazzal] A committee from the two parties was formed. However, the committee 'Arafat has set up is comprised of Fatah people and this committee insists that the dialogue is taking place between Hamas and Fatah while we, for our part, insist that the dialogue should be between Hamas and the authority. The issue is a question of form. 'Arafat wants to portray what took place recently in Gaza as a confrontation between Hamas and Fatah and not between the people and the authority. We say that those who opened fire on the worshipers were not Fatah members but the Palestinian police at 'Arafat's orders. From this premise, we have no quarrel to pick with the Fatah Movement on this issue. Our quarrel is with the authority. This explicitly shows that 'Arafat wants to manipulate the dialogue and does not want to attain results. The committee has spent a great deal of time arguing whether the meeting is between Hamas and Fatah or between the authority and Hamas.

There is a dialogue. But, personally, in light of the present configuration of the authority, with 'Arafat at its head, I do not expect it to produce positive results.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] Was it not 'Arafat who asked for this dialogue?

[Nazzal] 'Arafat asked for dialogue after he arrived in Gaza, but for the reasons I mentioned and not to achieve results. In any case, this is something we have left behind and the situation on the ground now confirms the soundness of what we say.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] Are you holding dialogue outside Palestine?

[Nazzal] There is no official dialogue. But, there is a dialogue with Fatah figures on all levels. However, you know that decisionmaking within Fatah is in 'Arafat's hands, and that the Fatah institutions, in practice, have no value as 'Arafat has voided them of their content.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] With respect to the Alliance of Palestinian Forces, they have a presence in the media but are absent in the political or militant arena. In your opinion, is this the ceiling of the alliance or are there obstacles which, if removed, will make it more effective?

[Nazzal] We view the Alliance of Palestinian Forces as a political forum and not as a front, grouping, or organization. It is a political forum of people who have different political and ideological affiliations. The alliance members are not united in terms of ideology or policies. From this premise, I believe it is carrying out the minimum of what it is required to perform.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] Then this is the most that it can do?

[Nazzal] This is the existing ceiling. But, circumstances and developments could impose a higher ceiling. This depends on future developments.

[Al-Ma'ayitah] In the recent report that the U.S. Congress has published, there was mention that Hamas receives aid from the Iranian ambassador in Amman. What are your comments?

[Nazzal] We read the congressional report and we were astonished that it did not contain any evidence substantiating any of the accusations it leveled. I would like to confirm that everything that was mentioned in the report is unfounded. Hamas does not get aid from any party. We call on those who prepared this report to be accurate and objective.

Islamic Jihad on Elections, Contacts With PA

TA2012162694 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 17 Dec 94 p 11

[Interview with Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Shami, "official spokesman" of the Islamic Jihad Movement, by Nasir Mahmud al-Sawir in Gaza; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Sawir] Are there any contacts between the Islamic Jihad Movement and the leadership of the Palestinian Authority [PA]?

[Al-Shami] Contacts and meetings are taking place among some symbols of the PA and officials of the Islamic Jihad Movement in a bid to reach a common understanding and solve the problems that arise in the Palestinian street.

[Al-Sawir] Is the Islamic Jihad Movement obliged to abide by and respect whatever decisions are adopted by the dialogue committee comprised of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Fatah, and the PA?

[Al-Shami] The Islamic Jihad Movement has its own independence, its own way of assessing matters, and its own way of thinking. Consequently, it is not bound by what Hamas and the PA might agree on, except in cases where that might serve the public interest and the Palestinian people. We are committed to this in advance even before the two sides reach agreement on it. [passage omitted]

[Al-Sawir] Do you in the Islamic Jihad Movement believe there is a possibility that the movement will join the PA or at least participate in the upcoming elections, so that it can be part of the constructive opposition working in the interest of the homeland and the citizens?

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[Al-Shami] Participation in the PA is not proof of constructive work or service to the Palestinians. I can serve while being outside the PA more than if I were inside. As for participation in the upcoming elections, the Islamic Jihad Movement has determined its stance clearly on this issue. Since these elections are executive elections for the Oslo and Cairo agreements, the movement will not participate in them, because that would contravene its principles and constants. If we feel that the PA is independent in its decisions and will and has come from the people to serve the people, we will be the first to support it and stand in its trench. [passage omitted]

[Al-Sawir] Peace between Israel and Syria is inevitable. Do you believe that in the wake of this peace the Islamic Jihad Movement will continue to enjoy the same freedom of action in Syria and Lebanon, or will the Syrian regime try to restrict your actions? The best example of this is what happened to Hamas in Jordan after it signed the peace treaty with Israel.

[Al-Shami] The Islamic Jihad Movement's main location and arena of action is Palestine, not Syria or Lebanon. The presence of some of our leaders in the Syrian arena does not mean that we and the Syrians move in the same direction. As you said, Syria's signing a peace agreement with Israel is inevitable. Consequently, we have prepared ourselves for such an eventuality. At that time, our brothers who are in Syria will go to any other place that is close to the Palestinian arena in order to maintain continuity and contact, but this will not affect our scope of action. [passage omitted]

Police Chief Interviewed on Domestic Issues

JN1712125694

[FBIS Editorial Report] The December issue of London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic publishes on pages 17-21 an approximately 8,000-word interview with Palestinian Police Chief Major General Nasr Yusuf. The interview is published under the following banner headlines: "A Stormy Interview with the Self-Rule Police Chief; Maj. Gen. Nasr Yusuf to FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH: We Signed the Agreement and We Will Honor Our Commitments/We are An Executive Tool, We Are Not Decisionmakers." The interview is conducted by Yasir al-Za'atirah and Hilmi al-Asmar.

According to the introductory passage, the interview was conducted before the 18 November confrontations between Palestinian police and Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, supporters in Gaza.

The first question posed to Yusuf is whether he has been selected by Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to be the man of "unclean missions," and whether he has developed "relations with the Jews beyond his mission." In response, he says that the question of "unclean missions" depends on the nature of regimes, noting that only undemocratic regimes have security agencies that carry out such missions. He adds: "But as for us, we have a clearly-defined national mission. I have entered [the self-rule areas] following a decision by the Fatah Central Committee, and to implement an agreement approved by Fatah to serve a political institution and system." He adds: "Democracy is based on polticial pluralism, freedom of expression, and free economy. In this case, security becomes a well-defined mission that has nothing to do with cleanliness or uncleanliness. It is a national mission that has to do with our people's interests and future.

"Regarding your question on private relations with Israel, my assessment is that I have no relations at all with the Israelis. I am not interested in holding contacts with Israel."

In response to a subsequent question, General Yusuf says: "It is true that there are meetings with the Israelis, but I have no private contacts with the Israelis. Anything said to the contrary is untrue. Meetings take place within the requirements of my job only."

Asked if his mission in the first 50 days after his arrival in Gaza was to tame and repress the Palestinian opposition, which the questioner puts at 50 percent of the Gaza population, General Yusuf says Palestinian citizens are not against the agreement. He points out that the agreement has the "unanimous" support of average Palestinian citizens. When asked about the "50,000 protesters who demonstrated against the agreement," he recounts the enthusiastic welcome Palestinian police were accorded when they arrived in Gaza, and adds that 50-55 percent of the reasons for the lack of security in Gaza are domestic and have nothing to do with Israel. Citing cases of robberies and unjustified killings, he indicates that the final stages of the intifadah were not as clean as its beginnings. Therefore, he adds, Palestinian police were warmly welcomed in the hope that they would put an end to insecurity.

On Palestinian opposition participation in the elections, Yusuf says no one will prevent the opposition from taking part in the elections. Asked about Israeli demands to exclude the opposition, he says: "They [Israelis] have nothing to do with this. This is a negotiatory issue discussed in the course of the negotiations. Nobody can abolish the Palestinian political movement or legitimate Palestinian political pluralism which has established itself through struggle. Nobody can abolish it at all."

Asked about what the PA wants from the opposition, General Yusuf says: "We signed an agreement. It is a binding agreement, with ensuing commitments toward our people and those with whom we reached the agreement. We are interested in honoring our commitments."

Asked whether it was part of the commitments to pass information about the Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas, the Palestinian police chief denies that any information was given about the kidnapped soldier or that the Palestinian police had any information about

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the soldier. He also denied obtaining any information about the kidnapped soldier from the cameramen who filmed him.

Asked again what the PA wants from the opposition, Maj. Gen Yusuf says that the PA wants the opposition to remain, and that it wants it to be strong. Asked to what extent the PA wants the opposition to be strong, he says the PA wants the opposition to be as strong in order to produce genuine Palestinian democracy, even if this leads the opposition to power. He voices confidence that Hamas will field candidates in the elections, noting that Hamas is in contact with the Israelis in this regard.

Asked if the PA plans to "confiscate" the right of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, to pursue resistance to occupation, Maj. Gen. Yusuf says: "We are committed to what we signed." Reminded by his interviewer that the occupation is still there, the Palestinian police chief argues for a wait-and- see attitude, since the PA cannot help honoring an agreement bearing its signature. He goes on to state that the interim period will lead to independence. Maj. Gen. Yusuf then agrees with al-Za'atirah's argument that while occupation remains, it is impermissible to delegitimize resistance. Challenged to reconcile the PA's plan to impound weapons from the population with his contention that he approves of resistance, Maj. Gen. Yusuf maintains that the weapons have not been collected yet, but the idea is to keep a tab on arms in Gaza in view of "the numerous adverse consequences" of uncontrolled weapons being in the hands of civilians.

On the question of some 5,000 detainees still held in Israeli detention facilities,the Palestinian police chief notes that they were supposed to have been released one month after the signing of the PLO-Israeli accord, but the Israelis did not keep their promise. Maj. Gen. Yusuf rejects the suggestion that, in the matter of detainees freed thus far by Israel, Fatah activists have been accorded preferential treatment over other factions.

Al-Za'atirah notes that Israeli officials have repeatedly stated that the PA will have to choose between Hamas and the agreement. Maj. Gen. Yusuf responds by emphasizing that this is a matter for the political echelon, whose directives in the security and executive realms he must execute. Maj. Gen. Yusuf is asked whether he sees the Palestinian security services doing the Palestinian people injustice. His answer: Why would we do that? Do you regard Hamas as all of our people? No, but they are part of them, the interviewer responds, and goes on to says that in elections to student and professional bodies, Hamas garnered 40-45 percent of the vote, but Maj. Gen. Yusuf contests these statistics.

Responding to an apparent attempt by the Palestinian police chief to downplay the significance and impact of the Islamists' resistance, al-Za'atirah contends that all Fatah's actions over the past 20 years pale in comparison with recent operations mounted by the Islamic Jihad inside Palestine. But Fatah, Yusuf counters, has spearheaded the Palestinian struggle and will continue to do so. His interviewer responds by reminding Yusuf that the Algerian FLN led the anti-colonial struggle but has now been shunned by the Algerian masses in favor of the Islamic Salvation Front.

Maj. Gen. Yusuf suggests that eventually Hamas will have the option of abrogating the agreement with Israel if it runs in the elections and secures 51 percent of the popular vote.

He is asked if, as the officer in charge of security, he would execute an order by the political and executive echelons to crush opposition to the agreement. Yusuf responds that he cannot say now, before knowing the circumstances under which such an order was issued. In any case, he claims, the political leadership has said nothing of the sort. The Palestinian police chief denies an assertion by al-Za'atirah that Yasir 'Arafat promised President Bill Clinton that Hamas would be crushed and noted that 'Arafat has clearly dissociated himself from any such statement.

Asked whether the Palestinian opposition's determination to pursue resistance puts it in the camp of those who want to "scuttle the boat," Maj. Gen. Yusuf answers that "the opposition must understand the nature of this stage and the regional and global conditions, as well as the hard times our people are going through."

Orient House Expanding Activities to Municipal Areas

TA2012124994 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Dec 94 pp A1, A2

[Report by Nadav Shragay]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Orient House in East Jerusalem, which has to date engaged in political activity, recently began dealing with municipal and legal matters.

A report sent to security elements in Jerusalem notes that in recent weeks Orient House staffers have launched a campaign to persuade merchants in East Jerusalem not to pay municipal taxes to Jerusalem Municipality. The report notes that Orient House is increasingly seen by residents of East Jerusalem as the authority for settling disputes as well as municipal and legal problems.

The report cites a large number of cases to substantiate this trend. For example, Orient House gave permission to UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Agency], which operates a school in the Wadi al- Jawz neighborhood, to put up a temporary utility building in the schoolyard while it renovates the current one. By law, such a permit is the prerogative of Jerusalem Municipality. UNRWA approached Orient House, rather than the municipality, after the owner of the building leased by UNRWA would not give his permission to do the work. [passage ommitted]

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Elsewhere in the report it is noted that UNDP [UN Development Programme] is used as a channel for the transfer of funds from European countries to Orient House.

Another case cited in the report involves a dispute between the owners of a restaurant in the vicinity of Salah-al-Din Street and the owner of the building housing it. [passage omitted]

Orient House issued a notice to residents of East Jerusalem to the effect that in case of disputes or civilian problems they should approach Orient House rather than the Israeli courts of justice. Also, an Orient House staffer has been assigned to approve real estate deals in East Jerusalem.

In another case, Orient House intervened in a conflict over a plot of land in the village of Abu-Tor. [passage omitted]

Another example cited in the report involves a complaint lodged with Orient House about a resident of East Jerusalem who failed to repay a debt. Orient House staffers sent members of Jibril al- Rujub's Preventive Security Service to the man's jewelry shop, and confiscated gold they found on the premises. Consequently, the debtor approached Orient House and said he was willing to repay the debt. A reconciliation meeting was held and the dispute was settled. [passage omitted]

The report sent to the security elements expresses serious concern about Orient House expanding its activities to other areas and notes Faysal al-Husayni's declaration two years ago in which he talked about his plan to set up a shadow municipality in East Jerusalem.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1100 GMT on 20 December reports that in a meeting with foreign consuls in Jerusalem today, Faysal Al-Husayni "denied reports in the Israeli press that Orient House officials have ordered East Jerusalem Arabs not to pay the municipal tax, and he also refuted claims that the Palestinians have already drawn up plans for tax collection in East Jerusalem. He confirmed that a waqf delegation is in Saudi Arabia seeking financial assistance, and said that he may join them there."]

Economic Committee Workshop in Jerusalem Banned

TA2112115694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In consultations at the Prime Minister's Bureau it was decided to prevent a workshop planned by the Palestinian Economic Committee on Development and Reconstruction [PECDAR] at the Ambassador Hotel in East Jerusalem. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports:

[Raz] From Israel's point of view, this is a test case to try and deal with the PLO's desire to establish political facts in Jerusalem. A short time ago, consultations ended at the Prime Minister's Bureau which were attended by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Police Minister Moshe Shahal, the head of the Shin Bet, Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir, and others. An unequivocal decision was made: To Prevent the PECDAR gathering because of the political repercussions.

PECDAR was set up following the Oslo agreements. It decided to hold a workshop in Jerusalem that will be attended by the economic bodies linked to the Palestinian Authority as well as other economic associations. Israel regards this as crossing the red line of political activity in Jerusalem, and decided at the consultations this morning to prevent the gathering. We now have to wait and see how things develop.

Ambassador to Iraq on Efforts To Return Palestinians

JN2112100894 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 21 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by Nasir 'Arif in Baghdad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian Ambassador to Baghdad 'Azzam al-Ahmad has said that the embassy has begun preparing a list of names of Palestinians who returned from Kuwait and were forced by the documents they carry to settle in Iraq, pursuant to a request by some Palestinian officials who seem to have received promises from Israel to repatriate them.

In statements to AL-ASWAQ, al-Ahmad said that the embassy has so far succeeded in repatriating more than 130 Palestinian families to Palestine after some of the al-Aqsa Forces who were stationed in Iraq returned to the self-rule areas.

He said that there are ongoing efforts to repatriate more than 15,000 Palestinians who returned from Kuwait and stayed in Iraq under the difficult circumstances due to the economic embargo imposed on Iraq since 1990.

On the issue of coordination between the National Authority and the Arab countries, al-Ahmad said that the current situation does not meet the required level of coordination in all fields, especially with Jordan. Coordination must be improved if we really want to prevent turning the Palestinian-Israeli accord into bridges for a new economic invasion of the entire Arab region, he added.

Commenting on the Israeli call for amendments to the Declaration of Principles, al-Ahmad asserted that Israel has no right to amend any of the Declaration of Principles provisions. He said that the ideal approach that could guarantee the establishment of a lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians lies in moving directly to the final stage of the negotiations.

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Algeria

'Terrorist' Body Count 17-19 December

LD2012185694 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement issued by the security services today said that the security forces killed 16 terrorists between Saturday and Monday [17-19 December] in Sidi Bel Abbes, Bouira, Batna, Setif, Skikda, Chlef, and Constantine. Following these operations, the security forces recovered a quantity of weapons and explosives.

Ban on Imports List To Be Dropped in 1995

LD2012215894 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The ban on import of listed products will be lifted by April 1995. This was announced by Trade Minister Sassi Aziza to investors who attended a seminar in Annaba today.

Egypt

Israeli President Weizman Visits for 3 Days

Meets with Culture Minister

NC2012140194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1215 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Dec (MENA)—Israeli President 'Ezer Weizman met this afternoon with Culture Minister Faruq Husni at the Republican Palace in al-Qubbah.

Minister Husni said after the meeting that President Weizman expressed Israel's strong desire "to normalize cultural ties with Egypt." He added that he stressed to the Israeli president that a discussion of this issue must be held with Egyptian intellectuals so as to define the nature of normalization, how will it start, and in what form.

He added that they also discussed the issue of Egyptian antiquities in Israel, noting that a high-level delegation will travel to Israel to prepare for the shipment of the last batch of Egyptian antiquities, which will arrive in Egypt on 28 December.

Discusses Peace, Cooperation

NC2012152594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1415 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Dec (MENA)—Israeli President Ezer Weizman has stated that the major problem in the Middle East now is how to achieve peace with Syria and that the shape of the entire region will change once peace is reached on the Syrian track.

In exclusive statements to MENA, the Israeli president said that the world we now live in is different in that military power has stopped being the criteria for measuring a state's status. Economic and technological strength has become the criteria. He added: Let us look at what is happening in Europe, Russia, and China—which is now growing into an economic tiger—and we will realize that problems have changed and that the whole world has changed from what it was a quarter of a century ago.

He went on to say: The Middle East region has also changed. It is an important part of the world and it is important because it has a number of resources, such as oil, the Suez Canal, and major countries such as Egypt. This region is also important because we live in it.

The Israeli president said that he expects stability to prevail in the Middle East in the future. He added that this will be achieved through our mutual recognition and our living in peace, understanding, and economic cooperation.

He noted that cultural cooperation is much more difficult because we speak different languages and hence our cultures are different.

He stressed that understanding and cooperation could in the end prevail in the region. He added that he will then be very happy because he belongs to the Middle East.

Issues Statement With Mubarak

NC2112094794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0900 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and Israeli President Ezer Weizman have reiterated the need to make full use of the prevailing climate to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

In a press statement issued here today at the conclusion of the Israeli president's three-day visit to Egypt, the two presidents expressed their belief that peace between Egypt and Israel is an indispensable part of comprehensive peace and that it provides a brilliant model for reconciliation and coexistence between Arabs and Israel.

The statement pointed out that the two presidents held intensive meetings in an atmosphere of amity and mutual respect to enhance bilateral cooperation and to speed up the pace toward comprehensive peace in the Middle East that serves the interests of all regional people.

The statement added that the two presidents reviewed recent developments in the peace process and concluded that it is extremely important to make progress on the road to peace without delay. In this context, the two presidents focused on ongoing negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli tracks and expressed

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their hope that the obstacles hampering progress toward peace will be eliminated in the coming weeks and months.

Mubarak and Weizman called on the parties concerned to do their utmost to serve the cause of peace and start a new era of stability in the Middle East.

The two presidents reiterated that there is a good opportunity to reach a just and comprehensive peace based on the UN resolutions and the rule of international legitimacy. They stressed that the present golden opportunity to expand the scope of peace and consolidate the structure of security in the Middle East should under no circumstances be wasted.

Concludes Visit

NC2112093094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0831 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—Israeli President 'Ezer Weizman left Cairo this morning after a three-day visit to Egypt during which he held talks with President Husni Mubarak. President Mubarak was at hand at the airport to see him off. During his visit Weizman met with a number of Egyptian officials and discussed ways of strengthening ties in various fields.

An official farewell ceremony was held for the Israeli president at the Presidential Palace in Heliopolis. A military band played the national anthems of Egypt and Israel and President Mubarak and President Weizman reviewed the honor guard. The Israeli president was seen off at the Presidential Palace by senior state officials.

Musa Comments on Mubarak-Weizman Talks

NC2012134694 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1045 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated after the talks between President Husni Mubarak and Israeli President 'Ezer Weizman that the Israeli president's visit to Egypt is more than a mere negotiating process between Egypt and Israel. He expressed the satisfaction of officials close to the two presidents over this visit.

Asked by Israeli journalists whether the negotiations should go ahead on the Syrian and Palestinian tracks together, the foreign minister said the two tracks need to proceed together.

On whether a date has been fixed for President Husni Mubarak's visit to Israel, 'Amr Musa said: Not yet. Such a visit was impossible a few years ago but now it has become possible at a future date.

On the issue of withdrawing the international peacekeeping troops from Sinai, Musa said: There is no Egyptian proposal on this issue. If Egypt and Israel believe this is necessary—or not, as the case may be—they must discuss it together.

'Amr Musa denied that the issue was one of the issues discussed between Presidents Mubarak and Weizman. He said there is no problem regarding the multinational forces. They only discussed the issue of the high cost of maintaining these troops, not canceling the troops' presence. They also discussed how to decrease expenses. He denied that the expenses are fully paid by the United States and affirmed that Egypt, Israel, and the United States bear the cost of maintaining the multinational troops. Each side pays one-third. He said that Egypt and Israel are discussing expenses, not canceling the presence of these troops.

'Amr Musa again denied that Egypt wants to reduce these forces and their deployment along the border. He said: Egypt did not submit a detailed report on this subject. The issue is not up for discussion.

Answering a question, Musa said that the issue of limiting armaments is very important and that we do not understand why there should be an unknown or unspecified nuclear program in the region. If we are talking about a secure future or a future of joint or bilateral cooperation and security, why then is Israel insisting on a nuclear program?

Asked whether Egypt will ask Iran to do the same thing, that is, to stop its nuclear program—Musa said: Iran is a member of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. If there are any serious accusations against Iran, steps should be taken in that regard. But a problem cannot be created to confirm its right to a nuclear program. If you have any serious accusations to level against Iran, do so with the international community and the organization concerned with the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.

On whether Israel wants a regional organization to monitor nuclear power in the region instead of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, 'Amr Musa said: I do not know, but I read something about this in the papers. We have not been notified of it.

He said that importing and exporting goods from Egypt and Israel will be discussed during the current talks when President Weizman meets with Egyptian ministers, as well as during the other meetings between the two sides, whether they are officials or people from the private sector. These contacts have been activated recently, particularly during recent weeks.

Regarding the Syrian track of the peace talks, Musa said: We leave this up to Syria and Israel to agree upon. There are efforts by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the U.S. Administration to get the two sides to meet. The Syrian-Israeli meeting has been postponed for a few days.

He said that there are hopes and ambitions but the issue itself is left up to Syria and Israel. It would be a good step if Rabin were to do something for the sake of Syrian public opinion.

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He added that it is not true that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad wants the whole of the Golan Heights without peace. He said that Syria previously announced often: We must have everything in return for everything. Peace and withdrawal have two distinct definitions, which need to be met.

'Amr Musa said the Palestinian track is the core of the peace process and that we need to continue with the elections as agreed upon. He added that anything that violates the Declaration of Principles agreement and its spirit will lead to a negative result.

Minister Comments on Increased Tourism to Israel

TA2012140494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Egypt's minister of tourism says that in the last seven months there was a large increase in Egyptian tourists visiting Israel. Minister Mamduh al-Biltaji told Israeli reporters that relations between the two countries are warm:

[Begin recording] [al-Biltaji] I would like to say that we received many of the Israelis as tourists in our country. We welcome them, we are happy.

[Unidentified correspondent] [Indistinct question]

[Al-Biltaji] No, no, you received also, and this is what I am going to tell you. I cannot say, but [Israeli Tourism] Minister Bar'am told me that they more than doubled in the seven first months of 1994. So there have been 5,000 in 1993, but in the seven first months of 1994 they reached 12,000. So I can say that this number is important. Another factor is that the Egyptians have longer stays. That means when they come to Israel they spend 12, 11, or 10 nights, and for us people working in tourism this is much more interesting in economic aspects, because when they stay more they spend more. [end recording]

Mubarak on Israel Visit, NPT, Syrian Track

TA2012201594 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Interview with President Husni Mubarak by correspondent Me'ir Kohen in Cairo on 20 December—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Kohen] There is a recurring question: When will President Mubarak visit Israel, and will President 'Ezer Weizman's current visit to Egypt pave the way to an expected visit by Your Excellency to Israel?

[Mubarak] First of all, President 'Ezer Weizman has not come here to pave the way or to do that sort of thing. I have no objection or sensitivity to visiting Israel, but I am concentrating all my efforts on promoting the peace process on the various tracks. As far as I am concerned, this is the most important thing. I do not have the slightest sensitivity to visiting Israel. I did not and do not need Weizman's visit to pave the way for my visit to Israel at all. Once, I visited Beersheba with President al-Sadat on the first Boeing plane that flew from here. There is no problem. I meet all the Israelis who come to Egypt, including officials. On the contrary, I feel pleased when I meet with Shim'on Peres and Mr. Rabin, who have come here often. 'Ezer Weizman visited here in the past. Different visits are taking place, including visits by the Israeli press corps. I have not turned down any Israeli journalist who has asked for an interview. So, there is no sensitivity. Let us focus on the peace process and concentrate all our efforts on peace. There is absolutely no sensitivity.

[Kohen] Your Excellency, the nuclear nonproliferation issue is one of the points of contention between Egypt and Israel. What is the Egyptian stance on this issue?

[Mubarak] We in Egypt were the first to consider the Middle East region as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. I made this statement in Baghdad at that time in the presence of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. Now, we have to renew the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT]. Israel and Egypt are two states in the region. We cannot sign if Israel does not do so. I understand Israel's fears, because the peace process is not complete. Let us sign until the peace process is completed. We are committed not to use weapons of mass destruction. We are producing neither chemical nor nuclear weapons, but how can we sign while Israel does not? Public opinion here will be outraged. That will provide room for unnecessary criticism. Even our domestic situation with the compatriots, the institutions, and parties will be difficult. If Israel does not sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty until a comprehensive peace is achieved, we will not sign either. I cannot sign if Israel does not.

[Kohen] The peace process on the Palestinian track is passing through a difficult and delicate stage in terms of the issue of elections and the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces from the West Bank. How do you envisage the resolution of the deadlock—the Israeli security need vis-a-vis increasing acts of terrorism by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad?

[Mubarak] There is a Declaration of Principles [DOP], which has been signed. I always consider Israel to be respecting all its commitments in this regard. The Palestinian president had the courage to sign the DOP despite all the difficulties he was facing. We persuaded him to go to Gaza. Then came the stage of elections. I understand Israel's fears about security. I believe that the Israeli Government should sit with the Palestinian administration to discuss how this can be implemented without contradicting the DOP, because the DOP's collapse or nonimplementation will lead to grave consequences. I fear the results of those consequences.

[Kohen] Your Excellency, the issue of Jerusalem has triggered and is triggering various reactions on the Arab

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level, especially following the Islamic Conference Organization summit in Casablanca, in terms of Jordan's trusteeship of the Islamic holy sites in the city. What is your opinion on the future of Jerusalem?

[Mubarak] Look, al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy land are in the heart of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is part of the Palestinian territories. Jordan has been the custodian since the 1967 war, but this is Palestinian land, and we should acknowledge this reality. We must leave the future of Jerusalem to negotiations. We should stop talking too much about this issue because it arouses the emotions of all Muslims throughout the world, not just the Arabs. This is a holy area; it has Israeli as well as Christian holy sites. We should avoid discussing the issue of Jerusalem as much as we can and leave it to the final talks so that we can reach a final solution to Jerusalem.

[Kohen] Is there anything else that Egypt can do to promote the peace process on the Syrian track now that the talks on this track have almost reached a dead end?

[Mubarak] I will tell you something. If Egypt had not launched the peace process in 1977, you would not have been able to reach agreements with either Jordan or the Palestinians, or to sit with the Syrians. Egypt is a pivotal country in the region whether we like it or not. It has been so since the beginning of history and will remain so until the end. Egypt is the largest and a very effective country in this region. Had it not been for our efforts, you would not have been able to reach either a Palestinian or even a Jordanian agreement. You will not reach agreement with Syria without our efforts. We have very strong relations with Syria. We have maintained brotherly contacts and friendship with Syria throughout history. Syria listens to us attentively. I believe that we are exerting the utmost efforts and holding discussions with the Syrian president in all spheres that will lead to achieving an agreement with Israel.

There are some factors that delayed this agreement, which I had anticipated. Now that Jordan has signed with Israel—and before that the Palestinians signed without Syria's knowledge—you should not expect Syria to follow Jordan and sign too. No, it will delay. When I heard about the signing, I said that this would delay the agreement with Syria, because Syria will never follow [last three words in English]. Syria considers itself to be a great and stable country that can resolve its problems by itself. It does not count on anyone. Therefore, I expected that Syria would delay, and that is what happened. Syria, however, seeks peace. On the orders of President Hafiz al-Asad, Syria has been reoriented toward peace. Peace will come; we need patience. Contacts between us and Syria, as well as between Syria and the United States, are continuing. All these are in the direction of peace. Syria seeks peace, and peace is the aspiration of every state in the region so that it might raise the living standards of its people. [passage omitted]

Cuban Foreign Minister Robaina Gonzalez Visits

Arrives in Cairo

NC2012154894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Dec (MENA)—Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina Gonzalez arrived in Cairo from Amman this afternoon on a visit of several days to Egypt.

The Cuban minister is scheduled to hold talks with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa on bilateral relations, the political situation in the Middle East, and the peace process developments.

Conveys Castro Message

NC2112093294 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0750 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—Following a meeting with President Husni Mubarak this morning, Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina Gonzalez said that he conveyed an oral message to the president from Cuban President Fidel Castro. The message expresses Cuba's desire to enhance economic ties.

The Cuban foreign minister said that during his meeting with the president they discussed the situation in Cuba, international issues of mutual interest, and recent developments in the Middle East peace talks.

Gonzalez said that he will meet with a number of Egyptian officials, including People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Fathi Surur and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

North Korean Envoy on U.S. Pilot, Other Issues

NC2012163894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1550 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 20 Dec (MENA)—North Korean Ambassador in Egypt Jang-song Jil [name as transliterated], praised President Husni Mubarak's role in establishing peace in the Middle East and the world.

Speaking at a news conference held today to mark the 25th anniversary of the completion of the "cement wall" built by South Korea in 1977, he expressed hope that Egypt and the friendly countries will help achieve unity between the two Koreas and achieve peace in the Korean peninsula. [passage omitted]

On the downing of a U.S. plane, the ambassador said that this is not the first time that the United States has violated Korean airspace. He added: The helicopter that was recently brought down by the Korean air defense reflects the tension prevailing in the Korean peninsula. It was warned before it was fired upon but it continued to violate our airspace and it was forced to land. It is

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normal to defend our sovereignty. He said: Any ship or plane that violates our airspace in the future will face the same measures.

He noted that when the United States carried out these measures the first few times, we handed back the ship or plane after the United States officially apologized.

He said that he expects the pilot who survived to be handed back after the United States apologizes. He added that these procedures can be done following the current investigations and the contacts between the two sides. But it will not be done if the mistake is not admitted.

The North Korean ambassador said: On our part, we wish to continue the negotiations and not undermine them and also to improve relations between the various parties in accordance with the Korean-U.S. agreement. But we will not beg for peace.

On Korean-Israeli relations, he said: When Israel withdraws from the occupied Arab territories, respects the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, responds to their demands, and stops its aggressions against the Arab nation, then there will be no objection to dealing with it. But these things have not been done yet.

In reply to a question on North Korea's sale of weapons to some Middle East countries, the ambassador stressed that his country is not contributing to the creation of tension in any region and is not selling weapons.

On the economic situation in the Korean peninsula, he stressed that North Korea's economy is an independent one and is standing fast despite the siege that has been imposed on it for a long time. He added that South Korea recently recorded a trade deficit of $7.9 billion and its economy is linked to U.S. aid and would fall if this aid was stopped.

Musa Expresses 'Deep Regret' on Fighting in Chechnya

NC2112123594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1210 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—Egypt has expressed its deep regret at the intensifying fighting between the Russian forces and Chechens.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said in a statement today that Egypt wishes success for the call to find a solution to that crisis through negotiations to preserve the basic rights and realize the Chechens' aspirations in the framework of unity within the regional federation.

Musa affirmed that negotiations are the only way to find a solution, while military operations involve more disputes and suffering.

Al-Baz Discusses U.S. Aid, Iran, Iraq

NC2012155194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1410 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Dec (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has affirmed that Egypt cannot be subservient to any other state. He said that Egypt plays a role on the international level and enjoys independent decisionmaking, far from being subject to subservience or pressure.

During a meeting with the students and professors of the political science and economics college at Cairo University today, Dr. al-Baz said that the U.S. aid to Egypt serves Washington's interests in establishing peace in the Middle East. This is evident from the fact that U.S. aid was increased only when the peace accord between Egypt and Israel was signed at Camp David, Dr. al-Baz added.

Regarding the situation with Iran, Dr. al-Baz said: Iran is a Muslim neighbor with whom we have no enmity. But there are two basic points which Iran should reconsider: First, Iran should not impose its hegemony and influence on the neighboring Arab countries and should not interfere in the domestic affairs of any country, since this would jeopardize Egyptian national security. And second, Iran should stop propagating the Shiite sect.

Alluding to the stand on Iraq, Dr. al-Baz said: Iraq is a fraternal Arab state. We hope the period of estrangement between Iraq and the Arab countries will end. Iraq should endeavor to spread assurance among its Arab neighbors. Iraq should also implement the UN Security Council resolutions concerning the recognition of Kuwait and its borders and the release of prisoners.

Discussing Egypt's request to join the Arab Maghreb Union as an observer, Dr. Usamah al-Baz said that Egypt's objective with this request is to play a role in gathering all the Arabs from the Arab East to the Arab Maghreb and forging them into a single Arab state, in view of Egypt's strategic role in the region and in view of its distinguished relations with these countries.

During the meeting, Dr. al-Baz stressed the need to free the region of weapons of mass destruction—be they chemical or nuclear weapons—and to set up a security structure in the region. He said that these are the requirements of the next stage, which will witness local, regional, Arab, and international changes. Such changes make it incumbent upon Egypt to prepare to face these challenges, Dr. al-Baz concluded.

Article on Expected Changes in U.S. Policy

NC2012155894 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 14 Dec 94 p 2

[Article by Muhammad Sayyid Ahmad from the "Our Foreign Policy" column: America's Policy on Middle East on Verge of Rudimentary Change"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I think that we should seriously reflect on the outcome of the U.S. midterm elections that were held on 8 November and the impact it will have on future conditions in the Middle East. Represented by Clinton, the Democratic Party suffered a crushing defeat unprecedented in 40 years. The far rightists in the opposition Republican Party triumphed in both the

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Senate and House of Representatives, as well as all governors positions contested in the elections. For the first time in decades, the chairmanship of the Congress' most significant committee is now in the hands of the Republicans.

What does this mean for the Middle East, particularly since successive U.S. administrations have insisted on appearing as the party capable of making things happen and deciding the course of events in the region? Former President Carter was careful to appear to the world as the man who made the Camp David accords. President Clinton is careful to give the agreements 'Arafat, then the Jordanian monarch, signed with Israel their official character. He is also trying to undertake a central role in concluding a Syrian- Israeli agreement.

It is being observed that real control in America has shifted from the White House to Congress, from the executive to the legislative authority. This is not just a theoretical view, but a truth confirmed by opinion polls. We have to note that the Israeli elections will be held in two years and that the present Republican majority in the House of Representatives and the Senate are closer to Likud than to the Labor Party.

True the situation was not the same with former President George Bush; the different aspects of the situation at that time were different in quality. The Soviet Union was still present and the bipolar world order had started to lose the feature of persistent hostility, although the order still existed. Now that the bipolar order is gone, America's enemy is no longer the Soviet Union, it is Iraq (at least in the Arab orient) after its invasion of Kuwait. The issue is no longer a potential war against the Soviet Union, it is one of actual war among Arabs.

Under these specific conditions, Israel was no "asset" to the United States; it turned into a "burden." After being the target of Iraqi missiles, Washington demanded Israel not to mount a counter-attack so as not to undermine America's position in the Arab world or hamper its efforts to unite all Arab states in one front against Iraq. In fact, it would not have been possible to hold a Madrid conference after the Gulf War or inaugurate the "peace process in the Middle East" if America had not bound Israel to receive the Iraqi missiles and refrain from reacting. America's objectives was to make Arab Gulf states feel that Israel did not embarrass them in time of need and that settling the Arab-Israeli conflict was the only way to avoid any future embarrassment if priority is given to hostility against an Arab state like Iraq. Hence, an objective accord developed between America and a number of Arab states against Iraq. This situation no longer exists, particularly after Iraq's defeat and the actual inauguration of the peace process.

The Republicans do not see any justification for their commitment to the peace process in the Middle East, which could strain relations between the United States and Israel, as was the case between Bush and Shamir. This latter crisis exposed the new relationship between Clinton and Rabin as though one should be thankful to them for reviving U.S.-Israeli relations, while adapting them to a U.S.-Israeli joint objective for establishing peace on a "Middle Eastern market" and "Middle Eastern bank" toward which international capital can contribute after being prompted and arranged by Washington. As Republican leaders have now imposed their hegemony on Congress, they see no reason for Washington to be lenient with those Arab leaders who hesitate in meeting Israel's harsh demands, and in particular in their calls to wage a ruthless war against everything they categorize under the "terrorism camp."

The Arab regimes that are friendly with America are being asked to become enemies of Hamas, Libya, and all the Arab regimes that are supposed to be following a policy similar to that of Iraq at the time when the Gulf crisis erupted. What is now needed is a revival of the regional bilateral polarity in the Middle East, even if it has been eliminated internationally. What is required is to entrench the victory of the camp consisting of Israel and the countries that want to establish peace with it over the group of countries in the region who oppose this policy. This latter group should be crushed firmly and without hesitation. This is why Washington believes that Russia's interference in encouraging Iraq to recognize Kuwait to end the Gulf crisis is a diversion from the line of policy and an attempt that should be opposed. The neo- Republicans are setting the stage for the return of the Cold War, provided that the two sides are the north against the south, not the east against the west. They are the supporters of a renewed formula—a stricter and harsher one than before—of the new world order launched by Bush. This is the new confrontation the people who won the recent U.S. mid-term elections are calling for.

It is clear that Clinton is being pushed by considerations that are the opposite of those governing the new Congress. He will support Israel's demands until the bitter end because he needs the Jewish vote to improve chances of his reelection as president of the United States in two years. Therefore, we are now in the thick of a competition within the American governing institution between its two parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, with their two branches, the executive and the legislative, to support the Israeli ruling institutions with its two branches, the Labor Party and Likud. It is noteworthy that dropping the Arabs from Washington's calculations only serves Likud's supporters in Israel more than the Labor supporters. This might decide the fate of the coming Israeli elections in 1996 and Likud's control, not the Rabin-Peres team, of the new Israeli government. The United States played a major role in Likud's defeat during the last elections. It could play a no less important role in guaranteeing Likud's victory in the next elections.

What is the future of the peace process in light of these developments and where does Cairo stand in all of this? It can have a role if it does not get sidetracked into tactical issues without due attention to the strategic

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aspects that have an additional dimension to them. These are questions that cannot be ignored any longer.

Cairo, Yemen To Cooperate in Extradition, Security

MM2012150094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Dec 94 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Cairo will soon receive the Yemeni interior minister to discuss the possibility of signing an Egyptian-Yemeni security agreement after Yemen has emphasized its full willingness to sign such an agreement and extradite any extremist elements wanted by Egyptian security authorities. That is, through cooperation between Yemeni security authorities and Interpol, to arrest these elements and deport them to Egypt.

Yemen expressed positive willingness to conclude a security agreement with Egypt to open up broader scope for cooperation between the two countries in the security spheres in the stage ahead. Sources have said that this was apparent in the assurances conveyed to Cairo by Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih during his recent visit.

Minister on 'Terrorist' Groups, 'Preventive Blows'

NC2112124494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1220 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Dec (MENA)—The security agencies have dealt preventive blows to terrorist and extremist groups that are trying to reorganize their ranks and cause confusion to show their existence.

This was stated by Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi, who made a statement during a conference with the Popular Front to Combat Terrorism in Cairo. He said that the security agencies last night and this morning liquidated two terrorist elements in the governorate of al-Minya during an attempted attack against the security forces that exchanged fire with them. A rifle belonging to the regular sentry who was martyred a few days ago was found in the possession of the two terrorists.

Relying on information available to them, the security agencies succeeded in apprehending 27 terrorists in the governorate of al-Qalyubiyah. They are from the active elements who tried to rebuild their structures to resume their terrorist activities. Weapons, ammunition, organizational papers, and false documents were found in their possession, al-Alfi said.

The interior minister disclosed the name of a new organization in the governorate of al-Sharqiyah. Operating under the name "al-Muwahhidun" [Monotheists], the organization includes eight dangerous terrorist elements led by 'Abd-al-Hadi al-Sayyid Zaydan, brother of fugitive terrorist Rif'at Zaydan, who lives in Asyut.

The security agencies found weapons, ammunition, organizational papers, and false documents with the members of the organization.

The interior minister revealed that the security agencies monitored a terrorist move inside prison led by four imprisoned terrorists that sought to strike at security assembly points and centers in Giza and seize the weapons in them. These four terrorists gave instructions to a number of terrorists outside prison to carry out acts of sabotage.

Al-Alfi added that the four elements were discovered inside prison, together with four others arrested outside prison, who received instructions from their imprisoned leaders. He said that the prosecutor general is interrogating the apprehended people.

The interior minister also said that the security agencies succeeded in apprehending 12 dangerous terrorists. He pointed out that their role in recent incidents is being investigated and that a detailed statement will be issued later today.

Rights Body Charges State Harassment of Lawyers

NC2012201394 Paris AFP in English 1857 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 20 (AFP)—Egyptian lawyers are victims of state harassment while performing their duties, the Egyptian Human Rights Organisation said Tuesday [20 December].

"The fact that numerous infringements have been committed against lawyers and human rights activists by security agents and the attorney general's services is a clear sign that human rights in Egypt have sunk to a very low level," a report by the organisation said.

"Protection of human rights and basic freedoms means that every individual is able to get appropriate legal help from independent professional lawyers," the report added.

The organisation gave as examples of harassment "long waits at prison gates, body searches on entry and exit, and sometimes confiscation of personal papers."

"In some jails, lawyers must have their hands stamped, which is humiliating, and if they refuse they are insulted. Private meetings with clients are forbidden and take place generally in the officer's office, and visits barely last longer than 10 minutes," the report said.

"In some jails, lawyers stand one metre (yard) away from their clients because of barbed wire separating them which means they cannot hear each other."

Egyptians Demonstrate in Mecca, Protest Maltreatment

NC2012110194 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 14 Dec 94 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Thousands of Egyptians have demonstrated in front of the holy mosque in Mecca, shouting slogans against the Saudi authorities and protesting maltreatment by the Saudi authorities.

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The demonstrations started following Friday prayers two weeks ago. The Saudi security authorities had launched a campaign to pursue Egyptians after they had concluded their minor pilgrimage rituals. Many Egyptians were arrested and extradited. The excesses to which Egyptians are being subjected, particularly by the so-called "sponsors," have increased recently.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Said To Ban Palestinians To Pressure U.S.

NC2112111694 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 19 Dec 94 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] An informed diplomatic source has information that Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's decision to prevent the entry of returning Palestinian families into Libya after visiting the Gaza Strip has nothing to do with his stance on the Oslo Agreement. Al-Qadhdhafi made this decision because Banghazi has decided to try to put pressure on the United States to force it to open a dialogue on the Lockerbie issue. The same source said that al-Qadhdhafi believes that his threat to expel the Palestinians from Libya would complicate the U.S. plans to solve the problem of the Palestinian refugees, who Israel refuses to accept and wants to be absorbed into the Arab countries.

The same source says that Col. al-Qadhdhafi is threatening to expel the Palestinian Arabs from Libya to achieve two objectives: First, putting pressure on Washington to force it to contact Libya on this issue so that these contacts may be developed to open U.S.- Libyan relations and, second, seeking to show that Libya is the country most capable in the region of solving the problem of the Palestinians by resettling hundreds of thousands of them in Libya. But Libya will only agree to this in return for Washington dropping its current policy against Libya and lifting the blockade.

It should be recalled that one of the cards that besieged Iraq is playing to address its ties with the United States is its preparedness to absorb hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs in a step that is in tandem with the efforts to settle the Arab-Zionist conflict.

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GCC Ministers Continue Meetings in Bahrain

Al-Qasimi on Iraq, Regional Security

MM2012145394 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Dec 94 p 2

[Interview with GCC Secretary General Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi by Hasin al-Bunyan in Manama; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Bunyan] Can we say that the Bahrain summit will work to achieve for the [Gulf Cooperation] Council [GCC] states the unified security concept whose achievement has been delayed despite the challenges and threats facing these states, such as the survival of the Iraqi regime and the lack of trust in dealings with Iran?

[Al-Qasimi] The Bahrain summit will look into developing military cooperation among the GCC states with a view to creating a deterrent collective defense system to safeguard the security, stability, and prosperity of these states.

We have made great strides in our defense and security cooperation, we are proceeding rapidly. Last year's summit in Riyadh adopted important resolutions on reactivating joint defense action among the GCC states, developing the Peninsula Shield Force, and forming the Higher Military Committee, from which numerous committees and working groups have emerged. And these have submitted their recommendations as regards developing and reinforcing defense cooperation among these states.

[Al-Bunyan] It is reported that the Bahrain summit will witness differences among some GCC states over the position on the demand for continuation of the sanctions imposed on the Iraqi regime. What do you believe the summit's decision in this connection will be?

[Al-Qasimi] I would like to stress to you that the GCC states have a unified position on and view of Iraq, This collective position is summed up in the need for Iraq to fully implement all the Security Council resolutions without any delay or procrastination, and to prove in practice its good intentions regarding the security and stability of the regional states.

[Al-Bunyan] What are the possibilities of normalizing relations between the GCC states and the Iraqi regime, which seems to be moving toward complying with the resolutions of international legitimacy?

[Al-Qasimi] Normalization of the relations between the GCC states and the Iraqi regime depends on Iraq's implementation of all the Security Council resolutions without any delay or procrastination. And it must prove its good intentions toward the states of the region by pursuing moderate and responsible policies and practices.

[Al-Bunyan] How do you view the establishment of a new Arab order while Saddam Husayn is in power?

[Al-Qasimi] In the light of the ordeal-catastrophe that afflicted us 2 August 1990, which wasted a lot of the Arab world's resources and energies and caused a deep rift in its ranks, we must work to remedy and rectify the defects in the joint Arab action march so as to lay new foundations for Arab relations with a view to sparing our region a repetition of this catastrophe. On that basis, the GCC states and both Egypt and Syria hastened to formulate new foundations for joint Arab action represented in the Damascus declaration. [passage omitted]

Final Statement To Demand Iraqi Compliance

LD2012165194 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today their majesties and royal highnesses, the leaders of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries, continued their bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the proceedings of the 15th session of the GCC Supreme Council which started last night.

Meanwhile, the GCC's foreign ministers held a working session today during which they approved the final version of the summit's draft final statement, which is scheduled to be announced in the GCC leaders' final session tomorrow.

Reports indicated that in its final statement, the summit will demand that the Iraqi regime complete the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions in connection with the war for liberating Kuwait, particularly those in connection with releasing the Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees held in its prisons and concentration camps. [passage omitted]

Leaders Hold Second Working Session

LD2012175894 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1620 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 20 Dec (SPA)—Their majesties and highnesses leaders of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states began their second working session this evening in the framework of the 15th session of the GCC Supreme Council being held in the Bahraini capital Manama. The accompanying delegations also attended the session.

Second Closed Session Ends

LD2012185194 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1745 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 20 Dec (KUNA)—The heads of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states this evening ended their second closed working session here in the framework of the 15th GCC summit which opened yesterday.

The Gulf leaders exchanged views on the draft resolutions drawn from the agenda with regard to various issues on joint cooperation. In their session, the leaders

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of the GCC member states dealt with political, economic, military, and security issues at the regional, Arab, and international level. The GCC leaders will hold a third session tonight to resume looking into topics under discussion, as well as to discuss the final wording of the final statement which will be issued at the end of their 15th summit. The Gulf leaders are expected to end their meetings tomorrow, Wednesday.

In a press statement made following the session, the Bahraini foreign minister said that the session was successful and that the Gulf leaders thoroughly studied the political issues presented to them.

Bahraini Minister Views Arab Ties

LD2012221194 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Interview with Bahraini Information Minister Tariq al-Mu'ayyad by unidentified correspondent in Manama; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Your Excellency, how do you assess the importance of convening the 15th GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] summit in Bahrain in the current situation?

[Al-Mu'ayyad] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. In fact, Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, his highness the amir, displayed great optimism regarding this summit more than once, in view of the fact that his highness is fully convinced that the situation these days requires firm stances from the leaders of this region. I believe that it was clear during the meeting of his highness the emir yesterday evening with the custodian of the two holy mosques and his brothers the region's leaders, that the majority wants this summit to be, God willing, a summit of good for and amity between all.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, do you expect the issuing of resolutions that will reflect positively and beneficially on the region's countries and peoples and on the Arabic and Islamic nation?

[Al-Mu'ayyad] This will undoubtedly happen. I believe that we should not jump the gun, today being the first day of the current summit. However, we are all quite rightly optimistic because the meetings of the competent ministers throughout (?the year) were fruitful. I also believe that it is possible to stress that the security, defense, and economic resolutions will be in the benefit of the stability of the region and the prosperity of its sons, God willing.

[Correspondent] How does Your Excellency view the international echo that the summit is getting on the level of information?

[Al-Mu'ayyad] There is a big group of journalists from various countries. I believe that the press center made every possible effort to receive these delegations. The interest of the world in this region stems from the region's respect for its leaders and also the respect of the world for the peoples of this region in view of the big economic power they represent in this world. [passage omitted]

I believe that we complement each other. The custodian of the two holy mosques gave his instructions on many occasions for the media in the kingdom and Bahrain to complement each other. I believe that 'Ali al-Sha'ir, my brother and counterpart, has continuous and direct contacts with us as instructed by the custodian of the two holy mosques. We believe that we should cast a new look on the satellite channels and that we should cooperate through them to reach the whole world with a unified voice. We should together examine this new television field, and we should cooperate to this effect. I believe that you have the human and material resources in the Kingdom, and we will be on you side, God willing. [passage omitted]

GCC Leaders To Hold Third Session

JN2112082394 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0525 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 20 Dec (WAKH)—A responsible source at the Gulf summit has told WAKH that the final session of the 15th conference held by leaders of Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states will be held at 1500 [1100 GMT] tomorrow, Wednesday. Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah this evening said that GCC leaders will hold a third session to be followed by the 15th summit's final session in which recommendations and resolutions will be announced.

WAKH has also learned that King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of fraternal Saudi Arabia, the custodian of the two holy mosques, who chaired the previous GCC session presented during the second closed session a report considered by press circles at the conference as a working paper for the next stage. It deals with various fields of action in terms of coordination and cooperation among the GCC states in light of events and developments the region has witnessed during Saudi Arabia's chairmanship of the 14th session of the GCC Supreme Council.

The report presented by the custodian of the two holy mosques comes as a precedent in the course of previous GCC summits in which the head of a previous session presented a report that includes the GCC's accomplishments during its previous session and the anticipated developments of the next stage in a way that reinforces joint action among GCC states and achieves the goals and objectives on which such joint action is based. The leaders of the GCC states expressed their appreciation for the report and what it contained in terms of trends and ideas that will help reinforce joint cooperation among the GCC states.

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Foreign, Finance Ministers Meet

JN2112082694 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0745 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 21 Dec (WAKH)—The foreign and finance ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] held a meeting under Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah at the Royal Meridian Hotel at 1000 today.

The GCC foreign ministers will discuss the draft final statement that will be referred to their majesties and highnesses, the GCC leaders, prior to its issuance at the closing session of the Gulf summit this evening. Their majesties and highnesses, the leaders of the GCC states, are scheduled to hold their third working session at 1230 today.

Border Disputes Discussed Bilaterally

LD2112090494 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0617 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 21 December—Gulf diplomatic sources today revealed that the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] leaders had not discussed border disputes between some of the states as a part of the official business of their 15th summit conference, which opened here on Monday [19 December].

The leaders of the GCC's supreme council are expected to end their summit later today, after a final session to be preceded by a meeting of the foreign minister for a final reading of the summit's final communique.

The sources said that the Gulf leaders had discussed border disputes at bilateral levels, and had unanimously agreed that there was a pressing need to settle them by removing the causes and their consequences.

On the justifications for the summit's refrainment from delving into those problems, the sources said that the leaders had expressed their belief that they should not treat them in a way that might give them a false significance, and that they must be contained within their normal magnitude, which the sources described as small.

The sources added that the Gulf leaders had indicated that border disputes of that magnitude required nothing more than brotherly bilateral dialogue between the parties concerned, which would be in harmony with their history, destiny, and common objectives within the sphere of the GCC.

The sources said that the summit's final communique would call for the denunciation of religious excesses [Ghuluw] and extremism, which would lead in the end to bloody violence.

The communique will call on religious ulema to highlight the ideologically moderate aspects, principles and values of the righteous Islamic shari'ah, which call for solidarity and fraternity, away from the incitement of sedition, according to the sources.

The sources confirmed the information received by Kuna yesterday that denunciation of terrorism would be included in the Gulf summit's final communique, on the basis of a proposal submitted by the Sultanate of Oman.

The sources also revealed that the communique would stress the GCC member states' readiness to cooperate with any state which wished to provide means of self-defense for the Republic of Bosnia- Herzegovina.

Sources Deny Qatar Request on Iraq Embargo

LD2112111694 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0949 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 21 Dec (KUNA)—Sources from the Kuwaiti delegation attending the proceedings of the 15th GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] summit, which is currently being held in Manama, say that no state participating in the summit conference has tried to adopt a resolution calling for lifting the embargo imposed on Iraq.

Commenting on yesterday's AFP report saying that Qatar tried to convince the other five Gulf states in this summit to adopt a resolution calling for lifting the embargo imposed on Iraq, these sources stressed to KUNA that the summit did not receive any initiative of this kind and that the issue was not discussed at all by the Gulf states participating in the summit conference.

The sources added that Kuwait did not comment on this issue because it was not put forward at all at the summit.

AFP quoted a Qatari source, which it declined to name, as saying that Kuwait expressed a strong opposition to Doha's initiative.

The Kuwaiti sources pointed out that the UN Security Council was the party empowered to discuss the issue of the embargo imposed on Iraq, and the Council in its turn stressed the need for Iraq to implement all its resolutions as a condition for lifting the embargo. At the end of their preparatory meetings for the latest summit, the GCC foreign ministers also stressed the need for Iraq to implement all those resolutions.

Ministers Meet To Finalize Statement

JN2112135294 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1220 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 21 Dec (WAKH)—The foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states held a working session in Manama this afternoon under Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah.

During the session, the foreign ministers will put the last touches to the final statement of the GCC summit, which will be referred to their majesties and highnesses, the leaders of the GCC states, who will hold their final session here at 1600 [1200 GMT] today.

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Bahrain

Clashes, Violence in Manama Detailed

NC2012185294 Paris AFP in English 1716 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 20 (AFP)—Shiite Moslem demonstrators clashed with Bahraini security forces in Manama on Tuesday [20 December] where machine-gun fire was heard and hundreds of students protested violence which has left up to nine people dead, witnesses said.

The fighting flared despite mass arrests by the security forces aimed at crushing the unrest, which has coincided with a summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the Bahraini capital.

Hundreds of students including veiled women held a rally on the Bahrain university campus at Sakhir "to protest the deaths of four of their Shiite colleagues," a teacher told AFP.

He gave no details of how or when the students died, but said leaflets calling for a classroom boycott and "political and moral reforms" had been distributed.

In Tehran the leader of the Bahraini opposition called on his countrymen and particularly students to revolt to restore democracy in the Gulf state.

Diplomatic sources in Manama said Tuesday that Bahraini authorities had arrested almost 1,600 people in the capital as well as towns and villages with large Shiite communities in the mainly Sunni Gulf state.

An inhabitant contacted by telephone told AFP that "on Monday evening and Tuesday morning machine-gun shots were heard around Shiite districts in the centre of Manama."

"A large number of special forces in black combat gear were posted around the main Shiite districts of the capital, where sporadic gunfire was heard overnight," he added.

Another witness said clashes had also taken place in the Shiite- dominated villages of al-Budayyi' and al-Diraz, south of Manama.

"Tear-gas was used to break up the demonstrators who, armed with iron rods and catapults, chanted anti-government slogans," the witness said.

Burning tyres set alight by demonstrators were scattered along the roads in several areas of Manama and al-Budayyi', he added.

The banned Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) said in Tehran that weekend clashes left five demonstrators and four policemen dead.

But the Bahraini Interior Ministry said just one policeman had been killed in the violence, which erupted after the arrest of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman on December 5.

A government source on Tuesday denied eye-witness reports that two people had died in clashes in the village of Sanabis, west of Manama. "The situation has returned to normal in Bahrain and nobody was killed on Sunday or Monday," he told AFP.

Armoured vehicles and special forces have been deployed in Bahrain during the three-day GCC summit.

In Tehran the IFLB secretary general Muhammad 'Ali al-Mahfuz urged students to "take the initiative and through shouts of protest and revolution help create a free and independent" Bahrain.

He called on them to boycott classes until "the wishes of the (Bahraini) nation for democracy, free elections and the creation of a parliament are realized."

The IFLB said earlier mass arrests were being made "at any time and under all kinds of circumstances" including house searches and arbitrary arrests.

Jo prison in the south of the Gulf archipelago as well as other jails were now overfull, the group said, charging that prisoners were badly treated.

The protesters are demanding the release of Shaykh 'Ali, arrested for having sent the amir a demand for the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975. They had vowed to hold a demonstration during the GCC summit.

The amir of Bahrain, Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, warned in his opening address of "the challenges to the region's security and stability," referring to border disputes in the Gulf.

The unrest in his country is the worst Bahrain has seen since the former British protectorate gained its independence in 1971.

According to Bahraini authorities, Shiites make up 35 percent of the country's population. But independent estimates have put the figure at 55 to 60 percent.

AFP Reports Prisons Riots After 'Mass Arrests'

NC2112100794 Paris AFP in English 0926 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 21 (AFP)—Rioting has erupted in several prisons in Bahrain after the security forces made mass arrests to stamp out clashes between Shiite demonstrators and the police, a Bahraini opposition leader said Wednesday [21 December].

The secretary general of the banned Islamic Front for Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB), Muhammad 'Ali al-Mahfuz, charged that the authorities had "savagely suppressed the rioting" which mainly involved recent detainees.

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In a statement received here, he said the condition of the prisoners was "very chaotic" and that many of them were "suffering from psychological difficulties."

"The Jaww prison (in south Bahrain) resembles a slaughter-house as the walls are smeared with blood," the Lebanon-based al-Mahfuz said.

He urged the international community to "show solidarity with Bahraini people's intifada (uprising) until they gain their legitimate rights."

Diplomatic sources said Tuesday that Bahraini authorities had arrested almost 1,600 people accused of stirring up trouble which have left as many as nine dead.

Violent clashes erupted between the security forces and Shiite Muslim demonstrators in Bahrain on December 12, after the arrest a week earlier of the Shiite leader Shaykh 'Ali Salman.

The demonstrators are demanding the release of Shaykh 'Ali, who had called for the restoration of parliament, suspended in 1975.

The arrests took place in Manama as well as in towns and villages with large Shiite communities in the Sunni-dominated Gulf state.

The Shiite IFLB said Monday that security forces shot dead five demonstrators and four policemen had also died in the violence which peaked over the week-end.

According to the authorities in Bahrain, Shiites make up 35 percent of the population, but independent estimates have put the figure at between 55 to 60 percent.

Saudi Arabia

'Source' Denies Yemeni Statement on Border Dispute

LD1812015894 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0035 GMT 18 Dec 94

[Statement by "official source" to the SAUDI PRESS AGENCY on 18 December; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Radio Monte Carlo has broadcast that the Yemeni interior minister had said in a report submitted to the Yemeni parliament that at a meeting between Saudi and Yemeni officials, the Saudi side had admitted transgressions and violations on the Yemeni border, about which the Yemeni Government had protested, and the Saudi side had promised to stop the violations.

The two sides had then agreed to discuss a cease-fire, withdraw the forces deployed in the border areas, and that both sides would refrain from using (Jabal al-Mashnaq) and to remove the roads built by the Saudis and regard them as non-existent. The two sides had also agreed to hold a meeting in the al-Sawda' area to continue the talks on the violations.

In order to assert the truth, what was broadcast by Radio Monte Carlo was not true.

What did happen was a transgression by the Yemenis on Saudi territory. The Kingdom had done nothing more than build roads to service Saudi villages which cannot be reached by roads within our borders. This was in accordance with the al-Ta'if accord.

Yemeni forces opened fire and killed a member of the team which was building the road, transgressing the border by 10 km.

Out of the Kingdom's wish not to let the situation escalate, and resort to reason, a meeting between Saudi and Yemeni officials was held to contain the situation. During the meeting, Saudi officials made clear to the brother Yemenis their encroachments and transgressions. They understood the Saudi point of view, and the two sides agreed on another meeting to be held in the next few days after the two delegations return home for consultations.

This announcement is being made in order to state the truth. God is the guide to the correct path.

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Targeted Army Officers Said To Face Liquidation

MM2012163194 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Dec 94 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The (opposition) "Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation" has cited Staff Major General Rafiq al-Samarra'i's warning of an imminent campaign aimed at liquidating a number of Iraqi Army officers.

On another level, al-Samarra'i has urged former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella to "keep away from the Iraqi scene" and to refrain from what he termed endeavors to ease Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's isolation.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has received a copy of the statement issued by the "Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation" containing a "message from Maj. Gen. al-Samarra'i to Ben Bella, in which he said:

Our people in Iraq have heard that your excellency is coordinating with Wisam al-Zahawi to prepare for what is described as a propaganda rally aimed at easing Saddam's isolation." The message urged President Ben Bella to keep away from the Iraqi scene.

On the imminent security campaign, another statement by the Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation said: "Maj. Gen. al-Samarra'i has been quoted by well-informed sources as saying that the regime in Baghdad has issued strict instructions to military security authorities in the provinces, party centers, and other security organs to arrest all the officers and retired officers placed under surveillance. And to arrest all leading and influential elements in civilian circles at the early stages of the large-scale revolutionary actions." The instructions order that these officers be liquidated in the event of any development in the situation (in Iraq). So we urge the brothers concerned to be vigilant and to take the necessary precautions.

Maj. Gen. al-Samarra'i urged security organs and those in charge of security committees in Ba'th Party centers to continue their new policy by informing the elements and cadres placed under surveillance about the situation, which will be registered for them as a jihad action promoting the people's great revolution.

Regime Reportedly Executes Long-Term Prisoners

NC1912170994 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In its latest issue, the newspaper NIDA' AL-RAFIDAYN cites a prisoner recently released by the ruling regime as saying that the ruling clique has started a large-scale campaign to execute the prisoners who have been sentenced to long terms in prison. The paper says that most of those executed come from the south and the marshlands and are directly accused of taking part in the spring 1991 uprising.

The paper adds that this prisoner witnessed the execution of a number of these prisoners who came from the cities of Qal'at Salih, al-Kahla', and al-Najaf al-Ashraf.

Vice President Ramadan Receives Islamic Leader

JN2012160094 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan has said that the great victory the Iraqis' have achieved under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn, and their thwarting of the largest conspiracy and aggression for which all the forces of evil and aggression were mobilized and in which all weapons were used is a victory for the Arab nation and an assertion of its strength, vitality, and rejection of the policy of subordination, humiliation, and aggression.

Receiving Shaykh Kamal Nasir al-'Anqawi, secretary general of the Popular [as heard] Front for the Liberation of Palestine, today, Taha Yasin Ramadan added that the Iraqis's achievements in the march of steadfastness and defiance and in the epics of reconstruction and defiance of the blockade have terrified the major enemies and their petty agents and slaves who wanted our great people to live in the dark so that they would be able to achieve their plots and ambitions and to colonize the homeland.

Shaykh Kamal Nasir al-'Anqawi expressed the pride of the Arabs inside and outside the Arab homeland in leader President Saddam Husayn's brave stands and wise leadership and his thwarting of Zionist, U.S., and reactionary schemes. He expressed the Arab masses' admiration and appreciation for him and their rallying around his wise leadership in his struggle for a strong, advanced, free, and independent Arab nation.

Iranian Agents' Headquarters Shaken by 'Explosion'

LD1912084894 Tehran IRNA in English 0726 GMT 19 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kurdestan Prov., Dec. 19, IRNA—A loud sound of explosion was heard at the headquarters of the Iranian counter-revolutionary agents in 'Razge' region, north of Iraq's Sulaymaniyah Province, last week, an Iraqi opposition radio announced.

The radio, monitored in this western Iranian city Sunday, further added that the explosion shook the headquarters but it did not point to the possible damage or casualty.

According to the radio, the bomb had been previously planted at the headquarters by unknown agents.

Razge region is in north of Sulaymaniyah Province, north of the Iranian township of Sardasht, near Iran-Iraq border.

Paper on Gulf Rulers Facing Security Threats

JN2112095294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0745 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Dec. (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has said that certain Gulf

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regimes, which adopted an anti-Iraq policy and squandered their oil wealth, will not find solutions to the crises that have begun to shake them and that are an ominous indication of a popular revolution or armed chaos.

In an article written by Hadi Daniyal under the column "Standpoint," the paper says some of these regimes will not find a solution to their crises except to resort to security measures that will open the door wide for the kind of armed chaos that emanates from a lack of confidence between the people in the concerned states and their regimes. In this case, we cannot rule out developments caused by foreign intervention to prevent the fire from spreading and harming the U.S. interests in the oil wells and the oil installations.

The article comments on the furious political turmoil facing certain governments in the [Gulf] Cooperation Council and the doubts this turmoil indicates for the future of certain ruling families.

AL-THAWRAH says: The future of the Al Sa'ud family is the main focus for observes since Riyadh is responsible for the crisis that is hitting the Gulf region in various forms—economic, social, political, and religious—and which, sometimes, reaches the point of security disturbances and violence.

The paper refers to the Saudi position in this regard, saying: Following the cease-fire in the Mother of Battles, the Saudi Government, which massed the armies of 33 imperialist and lackey states against Iraq, did not conceal expansionist schemes, not only in the Yemeni territory, but also in the territory of entities that are members of the Cooperation Council, thus creating a crisis among the members of that Council. This crisis added to the confidence crisis that is deepening and expanding between our people in a number of Gulf states and their rulers.

The paper says: The sins committed by these rulers in their domestic and foreign policies are interwoven and overlapping. The 30-state aggression against Iraq and the continued conspiracy to maintain the blockade has cost the governments of Riyadh and Kuwait hundreds of billions of dollars, which left these two governments in a state of financial deficit.

The paper stresses that the U.S. Administration will not hesitate to abandon the rulers who placed themselves under its protection when it finds that its interest conflicts with allowing matters to escalate to the point where they can no longer be controlled, thus opening avenues for various possibilities, including a popular revolution or armed chaos.

The paper notes reports published by THE WASHINGTON POST confirming that the situation of the Saudi rulers is similar to that of the Shah of Iran days before he was toppled.

Reportage on France's Claude Cheysson Visit

Cheysson Arrives in Baghdad

JN1612161294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1450 GMT 16 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 16 Dec (INA)—Claude Cheysson, former French foreign minister and member of the European Parliament, arrived in Baghdad this afternoon on a visit to the country that will last several days.

In a statement to INA, Cheysson said he will hold several meetings with Iraqi officials dealing with the scope of Iraqi-French cooperation in the coming phase.

He pointed out that his visit to Iraq will give him an opportunity to acquaint himself with the real suffering as a result of the acute shortage of medicines and baby milk and the failure of the health and services centers to play their role properly due to the continued blockade on the Iraqi people.

Saddam Receives Cheysson

JN1712140294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1300 GMT 17 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Dec (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has received Claude Cheyson, a former French foreign minister.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz attended the session.

[At 1130 GMT on 17 December, Baghad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic reports that National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih "today" received former French Foreign Minister and member of the European Parliament Claude Cheysson. The radio reports that Salih, speaking of the embargo on Iraq, says the sanctions confirm the determination of the "forces of evil" to undermine Iraq. Cheysson notes that a strong and independent Iraq is needed to fulfill its role in the region.]

'Aziz, Cheysson Discuss Cooperation

JN1712210994 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today received former French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, who is a deputy in the European Parliament. The two discussed Iraqi-French cooperation and stressed the need for its development and a return to its normal footing in the interest of the two countries.

Mr. Cheysson [words indistinct] and [words indistinct] the hardship Iraqi people are enduring from the unfair sanctions.

Cheysson Gives News Conference

JN1812205594 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Former French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson has stated that his visit to Iraq has

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enabled him to meet with His Excellency leader President Saddam Husayn and to hold lengthy talks with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz. The talks, he said, assured him of Iraq's determination to meet all its obligations toward the UN Security Council's resolutions.

At a news conference attended by the correspondents of Arab and foreign news agencies, local newspapers, and the Iraqi News Agency, Cheysson highly praised Iraq's determination to meet its obligations. He pointed out that his visit to one of the Iraqi installations has proved to him that the resolutions of the UN Security Council and the Special Commission have been implemented.

He also said that he has always been against any blockade imposed on any nation because it increases the sufferings of children, women, and the elderly and because it is a criminal measure against nations.

Cheysson said that the entire world has missed Iraq's role as a result of the continued blockade imposed on it, adding that balance in the Middle East needs Iraq to prevent evil forces from playing their role in the region.

Regarding Iraqi-French relations, Cheysson stressed that there were contacts between Iraqi and French officials to promote these relations in order to serve the interests of the two friendly countries.

Al-Sahhaf, Cheysson on Sanctions

JN1912081394 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 18 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf this evening received former French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, who is on a visit to Iraq.

During the meeting, the minister reviewed relations between Iraq and the UN Security Council and [words indistinct] Iraq's implementation [words indistinct] relevant UN Security Council resolutions and [words indistinct] invitation to the council to implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 and lift the blockade imposed on Iraq.

Claude Cheysson said he sensed that Iraq is eager to implement its commitments and to cooperate with the UN Security Council. He said he is confident that this will lead to lifting the blockade imposed on it as soon as possible and will end its people's tribulation. Cheysson said that Iraq's role in the region [words indistinct] is necessary to achieve balance, stability, and prosperity in the countries of the region, and to enhance the region's relations with the world. He emphasized that expediting the lifting of blockade on Iraq is necessary to enable Iraq to carry out its normal and positive role.

Cheysson also said it is important for Iraq and France to regain their previous prosperous relations with all that this entails in terms of positive impact not only on Iraq and France but also on [words indistinct].

Ties With France To See 'Major Developments'

JN1712190194 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1655 GMT 17 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 17 Dec (INA)—Dr. Riyad al-Qaysi, under secretary at the Foreign Ministry, met in Paris today with top officials at the French Foreign Ministry, including Mr. Bouchar [name as transliterated], head of the Middle East Department, and Mr. Rofierniet [name as transliterated], head of the International Organizations Department.

The French officials were updated on Iraq's ongoing diplomatic drive to have the unfair four-year-old sanctions lifted, al-Qaysi told the Iraqi News Agency's correspondent in Paris. He emphasized that the session was held in an atmosphere of understanding, openness, and accord.

France and Iraq, said al-Qaysi, have agreed to continue to work within the UN security Council in accordance with a specific and coordinated plan of action. He indicated that other sessions will be held soon to put into practice what has been agreed upon concerning the sanctions. The two sides also discussed ties between Iraq and France, which al-Qaysi said, will soon witness somewhat major developments.

Dr. al-Qaysi is visiting France to further bilateral coordination at the UN Security Council, begun in 1993, in the interest of an end to the sanctions. The under secretary flew into the French capital on 15 December from Casablanca, where he attended the Seventh Islamic Summit.

Airline Chief Cited on Losses Due to Embargo

JN1912155094 Baghdad INA in English 0950 GMT Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Baghdad, Dec. 19, INA—The Iraqi fleet of airplanes has sustained heavy damage due to the air embargo clamped on the country for over four years now.

The director general of the Iraqi Airways said that financial losses of the Iraqi Airways have totaled up to 291,638,608 Iraqi dinars over the period from March 1991 to December 1994.

Moreover, the embargo caused the closure of some 95 per cent of the Iraqi airways' office in world's cities and capitals.

Since August 1990 the Iraqi fleet of airplanes stopped functioning and flight were banned causing financial losses of some 15,655,560 Iraqi dinar, the director said, noting that allied countries held huge medical and food provisions in different ports around the world and banned them from reaching Iraqi despite the fact that were paid in advance. [passage omitted]

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Knesset Approves Rabin Resignation Resolution

TA2112070694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Knesset late last night approved a resolution calling for the prime minister to present his resignation to the president within 24 hours, but the Knesset speaker announced that the resolution is constitutionally and legally baseless.

The resolution was approved by six Knesset members with one opposed following a debate initiated by Tzomet and the Likud on the Ports' Authority.

The Knesset speaker announced this morning that there are only four ways to topple a government and a declarative decision is not one of them.

No-Confidence Motion on Peres Remark Defeated

TA1912175494 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 19 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A short time ago the Knesset rejected by 56 votes to 41 the no-confidence motion that the ultra-Orthodox parties submitted on Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' remark that he did not agree with what King David had done on the rooftops of Jerusalem.

Cabinet Briefed on Situation in Territories, Lebanon

TA1812171294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 18 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In today's cabinet session, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said that the main problems regarding the elections in Judaea and Samaria are the security arrangements and the Palestinians' demand that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdraw from the large cities. Rabin said the problem is how to ensure security, not how to hold elections.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that in today's cabinet session Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres briefed the ministers about his discussions with the representatives of the donor states. He said that they had promised that funds for the Palestinian Authority would arrive this week. Peres noted that if the funds fail to arrive, the health situation in the Gaza Strip, which is in dire need of funds, will be harmed.

Referring to the situation in south Lebanon, the prime minister said Syria will continue to support Hizballah until an agreement is reached with it.

Another issue discussed in today's cabinet session is the attack on the soldier Shmu'el Me'iri in Ramallah. The prime minister said that the soldier should have used organized transportation rather than his private vehicle. The chief of staff said that Shmu'el Me'iri will not be tried.

Sharon: Likud Will Not Honor Agreement With Syria

TA1812170594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 18 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Likud leading member Ari'el Sharon says if an accord with Syria is concluded close to the elections and the Likud wins, it will not carry out the agreement and the settlements there will remain. He told political party reporters in Tel Aviv the talks with the Syrians were not in difficulties and that the gap was very small. Sharon also said the soldier who was almost lynched in Ramallah should not be put on trial but the local command, which allowed him to be caught in such a quandary.

Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu says the peace accord with Syria will be brought forward before the people at the next elections. Labor party Secretary Nisim Zvili said Sharon's remarks were antidemocratic and a danger to the rule of law.

Beilin Predicts No Peace With Syria in 1995

TA2012180594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Addressing the Jerusalem Bar Association, Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin said the pace of progress of the negotiations with Syria will not produce peace in the course of the next year. Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports:

[Begin Beilin recording] The pace of the negotiations with Syria—as it has been since the Madrid conference, namely, during the previous government's term and during the term of the current government—will not result in peace with Syria in the coming year. This is my judgment.

I do not think 1996 is a realistic year for far-reaching political accords, mainly because of the American elections, but also because of ours. I think 1995 will be the year during which the peace processes in the region will be tested. I do not think the current pace will lead to peace in 1995. [end recording]

Peres Criticizes Opposition's Ads in U.S. Media

TA2012171794 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 0935 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Communication released by the Foreign Ministry spokesman; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yesterday, (Monday) 19.12.94, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres severely criticized the campaign of advertisements in the American media opposing the stationing of American soldiers in the Golan Heights. Peres referred to a large advertisement in THE NEW YORK TIMES placed by the "Coalition Against Stationing American Soldiers in the Golan," which states that these soldiers would be a primary target

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for terrorism. Peres claimed that these types of advertisements cause unnecessary panic on the part of the American public, and are liable to severely damage tourism to Israel and the willingness of American companies to trade with or invest in Israel.

Army Team Preparing Position Papers for Syria Talks

TA1812111794 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Dec 94 pp A1, A10

[Report by Ori Nir and 'Aqiva Eldar]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A small team of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers is currently preparing position papers that will serve the Israeli representatives when military negotiations with Syria begin. Heading the team is Major General 'Uzi Dayan, Planning Branch chief, and it includes Brigadier General Tzvi Stauber of the Planning Branch and an Intelligence Corps colonel.

The composition of the team was determined by the General Staff, with the approval of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. It has been decided that the team will be small in order to prevent leaks to the media. For a long time, the team has been collecting information on the various options for security arrangements on the Golan Heights. At this stage, the team is being careful not to expand the circle of persons attending the discussions and, therefore, reports directly to Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq and Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. The Foreign Ministry and other bodies that will be involved with the security arrangements in the future are currently receiving no reports for fear of leaks.

Sources connected with the negotiations have said that information leaked to the media over the past few months has harmed the preparations for the negotiations, which is why it was decided to set up a small team that will be expanded according to developments in the negotiations.

A military source familiar with the matter told HA'ARETZ that it should be remembered that because of the geographic and topographic differences between the borders, any IDF withdrawal from areas on the Golan Heights should be based on security arrangements that will be different in nature from those with Egypt or Jordan. [passage omitted]

Gur on Palestinian Elections, Redeployment

TA1912125894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 19 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur says Israel is a long way from signing an agreement with the Palestinians on elections and troop redeployment in the West Bank. Gur was speaking this morning during a tour of Ma'ale Adumim where he said that moves have been taken over the last year to ensure territorial continuity between Ma'ale Adumim and Jerusalem. Reporter Mark Weiss asked him how Israel will respond when the Palestinians raise the question of Ma'ale Adumim at the peace negotiations:

[Begin recording] [Gur] I do not know whether they would raise the question of Ma'ale Adumim more than the question of Betar or of Giv'at Ze'ev or Pisgat Ze'ev. This is a question that concerns Jerusalem, and we are not going to negotiate Jerusalem under any condition right now. What we are preparing is the best conditions for coexistence during the time of the autonomy without the permanent solution, and that is what I came to see: to what extent we can organize our security in such a way that will give the inhabitants here in Ma'ale Adumim, in Qedar, in the area of Bethlehem, the best possible security conditions.

[Weiss] Can you confirm that in the next stage in negotiations, Israelis and Palestinians will be discussing troop withdrawal, beginning with Bethlehem and Janin?

[Gur] I do not understand what is the meaning of admit. I know that we negotiate. There are many points of negotiations, some of them the continuation of the agreement in Cairo, some of them new ones, especially concerning the elections and the redeployment. I believe that we are very far yet from being in a position to sign any agreement about that because, as you know, among the Palestinians there are a lot of discussions. It is quite difficult to receive from the Palestinians a solid position about security, and this is the main point. All the other suppositions, speculations are really not of my interest. [end recording]

Gur Views IDF Operations in South Lebanon

TA2012063194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur has said: We are continuing to look for new measures in our war against the Hizballah terrorists and I believe we will overcome the terrorists. Yesterday, our correspondent Gil Litman asked the deputy defense minister if the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] should initiate an operation in Lebanon.

[Begin recording] [Gur] We are have tried every possible tactic and strategy in south Lebanon. That does not mean we are not looking for new ways using more sophisticated measures, but we must realize that each time we find an answer they might come up with a response, and the cycle will repeated itself long as the conflict continues. I was commander of the Northern Command when our entire policy was based on initiating action. Our troops were stationed along the Israeli border, the settlements were on the frontier, since there was no security zone, and yet we did not have quiet. That means that what we is required of us is steadfastness and self-control, an unending search for new and innovative measures to overcome Hizballah. I believe that just as we overcame them in the past, we will overcome them this time.

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[Litman] Perhaps we should return to the system used in the 1950's —small groups attacking concentrations of terrorists in the interior and then returning to base?

[Gur] During the entire period of special operations, I regret to say that we did not achieve a cessation of terrorist actions. Therefore, I suggest that we do not become nostalgic for a situation that did not exist, but to study the new situation and come up with answers to it. That is what we are doing. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 20 December quotes Major General 'Amiram Levin, commander of the Northern Command, as saying that "IDF soldiers acted properly in both incidents in south Lebanon. He said there is a tough war in the security zone, and stressed that if we do not have quiet on our side, there will be no quiet on their side."]

Sarid on Lebanon Situation, Talks With Syria

TA2012131094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Environment Minister Yosi Sarid says the Israeli Government has not placed any political pressure on the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to limit its activity against Hizballah in Lebanon. He said the Army must and can take the initiative. Speaking to No'omi Segal during a tour of Bet Shemesh, Sarid said a war of attrition is being fought in south Lebanon:

[Begin recording] [Sarid] There is a war of attrition in the southern part of Lebanon, and in such a case we have to demonstrate an Israeli initiative. There are no limitations whatsoever—political limitations—on the IDF, and the IDF are capable enough to deal with the very severe situation in this particular case.

[Segal] Talks are resuming this week between Israel and Syria. Do you see a parallel between the resumed violence, or the continuing violence in south Lebanon, and the movement in talks?

[Sarid] Well, there is no doubt about it, that if Syria would have been very much interested, Syria could have put restraint on the Hizballah forces in the southern part of Lebanon; that is to say that at the present time they are not interested enough, because they want to play the card of the situation in Lebanon as one of the cards on the table of the negotiations. We don't like this idea, but this is another reason, or additional reason, for us to reach an agreement with Syria as soon as possible.

[Segal] And turning to your talks tomorrow, you said you will be taking part in talks, along with Foreign Minister Peres, with Yasir 'Arafat. What are your expectations?

[Sarid] I believe that we will express more flexibility on the side of the elections, and we will be more strict on the side of our security needs. [end recording]

Fatah Not Hamas Said To Initiate Ramallah Attack

TA1812112794 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Dec 94 p A1

[Report by Ze'ev Schiff]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There has been a shift in the investigation into the attack on reserve soldier Shmu'el Me'iri in Ramallah last week. It has become apparent that most of his attackers are Fatah activists and not Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members, as initially believed. Some of the people arrested in the wake of the attack have admitted to taking part in it. It also became apparent that the man who called in the Border Police and later handed the soldier's gun to the police was not a Fatah member, as published initially.

The investigation found that the attack was not planned, but it is obvious that Fatah men initiated and led it.

Immediately after the incident, it was believed that Me'iri accidentally drove through a Ramallah location where a rally of Hamas supporters was to take place and that they attacked him. It later became apparent that eight of the 10 persons arrested—most of whom were apprehended after they were found to appear in photographs taken at the site by Palestinian photographers—were Fatah members, and only one belongs to Hamas.

The Fatah and Hamas activists who were arrested served prison terms in the past, mostly for security offenses. Most of them live in the al-Jalazun and Qasura refugee camps and are not teenagers but rather 20-30 years old. [passage omitted]

Baraq Allows Settlers To Farm Land on Jordan River

TA2012140794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The chief of staff has authorized the Jordan Valley settlers to farm the lands almost up to the riverbank. The chief of staff's authorization was relayed to David Levi, chairman of the Jordan Valley Regional Council, by Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur during a visit to the Jordan Valley. Our settlement affairs correspondent Gil Litman reports that the authorization pertains to 13,000 dunams which have not been tilled because there was no peace with Jordan.

Hebron Settlement Said Expanding

TA2012192494 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Nitzan Hen video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Jewish settlement in Hebron is expanding. The Society for the Revival of Jewish Settlement in Hebron, headed by Rabbi Moshe Levinger, plans to build two new houses between the Avraham Avinu neighborhood and Bet Romano, in a bid

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to create contiguous Jewish housing. Three buildings in Hebron's Jewish settlement have been recently revamped and enlarged. Our correspondent Nitzan Hen was in Hebron today:

[Begin Hen recording] While the government still debates whether and when to move Jews out of Hebron, the Hebron settlers keep building and expanding. Bet Shneorson, for instance, has received two new floors that will house five new families. Bet Hason and Bet Kastel have been refurbished, while the Shavey Hevron Yeshiva moved to a new residence: the Bet Romano building, which was refurbished at the cost of $500,000. The yeshiva grew by 30 students within a few months, and the number of resident families grew from 40 to 50.

Since the massacre at the Cave of the Patriarchs, the Society for the Renewal of Jewish Settlement in Hebron has raised about $1 million, in addition to a modest contribution from the Construction and Housing Ministry's coffers. [passage omitted][end recording]

The settlers at Tall al-Rumaythah, a nine-trailer neighborhood, also speak of expansion. Barukh Marzel, who was confined to the neighborhood by a court decree, has been able to raise funds for three new trailers for the site. [passage omitted]

Weizman Comments on Talks With Mubarak

TA2112110594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Weizman has returned to Israel from a visit to Egypt. Upon his return, he said that during his talks with President Mubarak he reached the understanding that there is a basis for progress in the peace process. President Weizman explained that he accepted President Mubarak's invitation to visit Egypt in the hope that the Egyptian president would make a reciprocal visit to Israel. Regrettable, however, he could not, announce a visit by Mubarak to Israel in the near future.

Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that on the MIA issue President Weizman said that his military aide remained in Egypt to help locate 19 soldiers who went missing during the Yom Kippur War. The military aide will be assisted by a senior Egyptian intelligence officer that President Mubarak appointed to handle the matter. President Weizman added that the signing of the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was not discussed at all with President Mubarak since, in his opinion, there was no chance that Israel would accept Egypt's demands in this sphere as long as there was not comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Islamic Leader Expects Release of Hamas Founder

MM1912153694 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Dec 94 p 3

[Report by 'Ali al-Salih: "Leader of Islamic Movement in Israel Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Are 90 Percent Hopeful That Hamas Founder Will Be Released Soon"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Shaykh 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish, leader of the Islamic movement in Israel, expects Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, to be released from Israeli jails soon. He said, "we are 90 percent hopeful that Shaykh Yasin will be released and will return to his family soon."

He confirms his expectation by saying that "Shaykh Yasin's deteriorating health condition and the fear that he might die in prison are a strong motive for his early release." [passage omitted]

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in his city of Kafr Qasim in the 1948 areas Shaykh 'Abdallah said: "This is the conviction of the Palestinian Authority, which sees him (that is, Shaykh Yasin) as a major pillar for national stability and Palestinian national unity. This is also the view of the Israelis—which causes us to be very optimistic about the possibility of his release soon."

Shaykh 'Abdallah and other Palestinian and Israeli figures are mediating with the Israelis to secure Shaykh Yasin's release. He said: "We—Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and I—have long been working to secure the release of Shaykh Yasin, who has been in prison in Israel since 1989." [passage omitted]

Asked whether the aim of working to secure Shaykh Yasin's release is to confront what some people term the extremism of Hamas' external leadership, Shaykh 'Abdallah said "either side has its own assessment of this question. We believe that releasing Shaykh Yasin at this stage is very important for national stability." [passage omitted]

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Government Issues Statement on Chechnya

JN2012190494 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 20 Dec 94

["Text" of statement issued by the official government spokesman in Amman on 20 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is following the regrettable events in Chechnya as well as the pain and suffering to which innocent women, children, and elderly are subjected.

Stemming from His Majesty King Husayn's eagerness to spare the blood of innocent Muslims and safeguard their security and stability, the Jordanian Government calls on all parties to the dispute to exercise self-restraint, refrain from using arms, and resort to dialogue designed to defuse the crisis and bring an immediate halt to the fighting.

While expressing its concern over the continuing fighting and escalation of the crisis, the Jordanian Government calls on all parties to resort to reason and wisdom in order to reach, through dialogue, a fair and honorable solution which will safeguard the lives, rights, dignity, and future of all.

The Jordanian Government also calls for containing the crisis, so its negative repercussions will not extend beyond its current limits.

ICO's 'Disregard' of Role in Jerusalem Noted

JN1812105894 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 18 Dec 94 pp 1, 15

[Editorial: "We Carry Out Our Duty and Ask for the Testimony of None"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanians—king and people—do not need others to testify to their historic role regarding the homeland's issues and the nation's battles. As regards Jerusalem, we are interested in this testimony inasmuch as it is related to others' desire to stand by truth and not falsehood, by history that is based on facts and not a funny history that is based on conferences, meetings, alliances, animosities, and grudges.

Jordanians—king and people—given their interest in the truth, and their confidence in the judgment of history not personal whims, the judgment of nation not persons, and the judgment of the homeland not that of financiers—might have been, to some extent, hurt by the Casablanca summit's disregard of the role of the Hashemites and all Jordanians in maintaining the Islamic holy sites and in ensconcing the holy trust in their hearts. Jordanians have done so to prevent anyone from harming or conspiring against these holy places and to stave off any violation of their sacredness by any adversary. We believe Jordanians pin little hope on a fair judgment that does not come from the homeland, nation, and history. Modern history has witnessed much distortion of the holy sites. The roles played by some parties were covered up as part of the plotting against the homeland and nation and with the aim of doing injustice to those who have been always ready to sacrifice dearly in order to keep their forefronts high.

We were not enraged, but rather saddened, by what happened in Casablanca. We were not hurt by the weakness of those who reversed their positions, statements, and claims very easily and their submission to pressure and bribes, but rather saddened by that retreat, which we thought had ended with the Dakar summit. The Casablanca summit revealed the dim future awaiting the nation, Islam, and the homeland.

Jordanians—king and people—will continue to carry out their role and duty and will continue to protect what was entrusted with them by the nation. Jordanians do not ask for thanks or testimony from anyone. They do not care much about the denial of their duty or the attempt to sell it out to others for the cheapest price. They will continue to adhere to manhood, pride, courage, democracy, belonging to pan-Arabism, just as the nation has always known. They do not wait for a reward from anyone, except for that from God, history, and their conscience, which is a sufficient reward.

'Political Isolation' at Islamic Summit Viewed

JN1912140894 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 19 Dec 94 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan's political isolation deepened following the Islamic summit in Casablanca last week. The results of that summit are totally contrary to the great hopes Jordan attached to this summit, which it tried to use as a way to improve its political relations with the Gulf states in particular, and the Arab and Islamic states in general.

Arab and foreign observers who followed up proceedings of the Islamic conference noted with astonishment how most parties in the conference, whether those involved in the settlement, such as Egypt and Morocco, or those who have reservations about it, such as Iran and Iran, agreed on supporting the Palestinian viewpoint and opposing the Jordanian position on the right to supervise the affairs of the Islamic shrines in Jerusalem.

King Husayn's boycotting of the conference meetings and leaving Morocco before the end of discussions of agenda topics has been a strong Jordanian protest against the political maneuvers practiced against the Jordanian position on Jerusalem shrines. These maneuvers were basically not aimed at supporting the Palestinian position but to settle special and old accounts with Jordan.

In spite of the attempts to calm down and play down the subject by Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali during his news conference, informed Jordanian sources told AL-MAJD that Jordanian officials are most anxious and disturbed about the results of Casablanca summit,

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and that the Jordanian-Palestinian relations are in their most delicate and tense situation since the Oslo agreement last year.

The Jordanian sources added that the Jordanian officials studying the results of the Islamic conference have concluded that the Jordanian reactions should remain calm and balanced, away from convulsion, especially concerning the relationship with the Palestinian Authority [PA] which should continue at least on the minimum levels.

For his part, the Palestinian Ambassador in Amman 'Umar al-Khatib told AL-MAJD that the PA wants to maintain its special relations with Jordan, and said the PA was not involved in the maneuvers and practices that took place behind the scenes during the Islamic summit.

He added that Yasir 'Arafat, who was due to visit Jordan after the Casablanca summit, did not cancel this visit but postponed it to another suitable date next week.

Political observers in Amman expect that the Jordanian effort in the short run to focus on tackling internal conditions that have been exposed to shocks following the signing of the peace treaty with the Israeli enemy. As for the long run, the Jordanian decisionmaker will be forced to introduce comprehensive changes in policies, leaders, and programs in order to end Jordan's Arab and Islamic isolation, so Jordan will resume its ordinary role even if this is made at the expense of requirements of the peace treaty that brought more internal burdens and external problems to Jordan and not vice versa, as those who advocate reconciliation and normalization used to propagate.

Talks Focus on Free Trade Pact With Israel

TA1612135094 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Dec 94 p 2

[Report by Jose Rosenfeld]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israeli and Jordanian negotiators yesterday began focusing on the nuts and bolts of reaching a free trade agreement and close economic cooperation.

The Joint Trade and Economic Cooperation Committee, which met in Dayr 'Alla, Jordan, decided to create a trade subcommittee and a panel that will be responsible for investment, industrial cooperation, and monetary and banking issues.

The trade subcommittee, which will be headed on the Israeli side by the Customs Service, will focus in the coming months on reaching a Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade agreement between the countries. According to the Treasury's international division director Ehud Kaufman, who co-chairs the joint committee, the Jordanians are pushing to start talks on MFN status.

Moreover, Kaufman adds, the Jordanians have a broad concept of economic cooperation, with a heavy emphasis on a bilateral framework that includes Israeli investments in Jordan, joint industrial development, and joint free processing zones.

Asked whether the Jordanians envision setting up assembly plants next to the border, Mexico-style, Kaufman responded that his counterparts are strongly influenced by the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) agreement model.

Israeli Lawyer To Meet Palestinian Deportees

JN2112111294 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 21 Dec 94 p 4

[Report by Nasir 'Arif]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli lawyer Li'a Tsemel [name as transliterated], who resides in Jerusalem and is famous for defending Palestinian prisoners and deportees, as well as cases related to the reunion of Palestinian families, arrived in Amman the day before yesterday [19 December].

During her presence in Amman, Tsemel will hold several meetings with a group of Palestinian deportees in an effort to get their approval to represent them in the courts in Israel. She will also contact legal quarters in Israel that are related to the issue in order to exert pressure toward repatriating all the Palestinians against whom deportation decisions were issued.

Lawyer Tsemel is thought to have met with the Palestinian Deportees Committee in Jordan yesterday in order to discuss all the deportation decisions issued by Israel against 1,000 Palestinian citizens since 1970. [passage omitted]

Brotherhood Hardliners Said Gaining Ascendancy

JN1912133594 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 19 Dec 94 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned that the hardline trend within the Muslim Brotherhood has gained ascendancy and that the moderate trend has started to reassess its stands and calculations in light of the ever-escalating government measures against the Muslim brothers.

Muslim Brotherhood hardliners told AL-MAJD that the government's measures have brought about a unity of vision and viewpoints within the brotherhood that has been unprecedented over the past five years.

These sources said that the government's scorn for the Muslim Brotherhood and the ongoing pressure it brings to bear on it to have it appear as if it is unable to defend itself have had the opposite effect that the government wanted. The number of hardliners has increased and they are supported by young cadres and leaders. Also, the

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well-known differences on political concepts and viewpoints between the doves and the hawks have somewhat disappeared.

The Muslim Brotherhood sources listed the many violations that have provoked the Muslim brothers, the most prominent being the beating House of Representatives member 'Abd-al-Mun'im Abu-Zant received, the repeated arrest of former deputy Muhammad Abu-Faris and others, the banning of marches and rallies, the dissolution of the Islamic support committee to remove Muslim Brotherhood members from it, and banning Muslim brotherhood preachers from delivering sermons and giving lessons in mosques, including the Islamic Hospital mosque.

Islamic Action Front Denies MP's Withdrawing

MM1912094494 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Dec 94 p4

[Report by Muhammad Mashariqah: "Jordanian Islamic Front will not withdraw from Parliament; Tahir al-Masri denies from Nabulus that he has retired from politics"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—Dr. Hamzah Mansur, official spokesman of the deputies of the Islamic Action Front [IAF] in Jordan, has denied press reports that some of the IAF deputies intended to resign from the House of Representatives in protest against the political and internal situation in Jordan. Former Jordanian House of Representatives Speaker Tahir al-Masri has also denied that he is retiring from politics, and he confirmed that he will continue to shoulder his responsibilities as a deputy in the House of Representatives.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Dr. Mansur said: "There is no change in the IAF's policy in the house despite the fact that we have condemned the detention of scholar Dr. Muhammad Abu-Faris in connection with a speech he made against Jews in one of the mosques.

"We did that in a statement read out by Dr. Hammam Sa'id in the session held the day before yesterday. In it he reviewed the circumstances and the humiliating treatment of that distinguished scholar and politician."

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Dr. Hammam Sa'id said that his statement to the deputies was in defense of public liberties which are often violated these days, and was also a criticism of the government's policy which has prevented the ulema and intellectuals from expressing their views.

Dr. Sa'id, who is considered to be one of the IAF hawks, denied that he threatened to resign from the House of Representatives over the government's practices. He said the IAF was examining the excesses and trying to act peacefully and in dialogue with the government in order to preserve security and reassurance. [passage omitted]

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Minister Views Middle East Market, Debts, Boycott

NC2012135094 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 14 Dec 94 p 5

[Interview with Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, by Sana' al-Sa'id, in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Sa'id] In view of current developments, do you see the ground prepared for establishing a Middle East market?

[Yasin] This market is like other organizations currently being broached. There are requirements and conditions for establishing such organizations. When these conditions are met, we can then discuss establishing a Middle East market. The first of these conditions is establishing a fair and comprehensive peace that returns all the occupied Arab territories to their owners and the legitimate rights to the Arab people.

[Al-Sa'id] What about the Arab boycott of Israel, especially as voices are emerging that it is not justified?

[Yasin] This is untrue: The Arab boycott of Israel has its reasons and justifications. The boycott was one of the means for deterring aggression and preventing settlements in the Arab territory and the usurping of land. Lifting the boycott can only be discussed when the Israeli aggression is ended, the occupied territories returned to their owners, and the legitimate rights regained.

[Al-Sa'id] Regarding the economic cartels, why has the Damascus Declaration not succeeded in establishing a common economic entity among the member states?

[Yasin] We in Syria support any Arab effort and formula aimed at enhancing cooperation, solidarity, and integration in the political, economic, and social fields. We will continue to make every effort to achieve cooperation, solidarity, and integration in these fields.

[Al-Sa'id] Does this mean that there are joint projects between you and other Arab countries?

[Yasin] There are joint committees between Syria and the various Arab countries to strengthen economic cooperation. These committees meet periodically to discuss various topics and proposals to promote cooperation, solidarity, and integration. We have many joint projects with numerous Arab countries within the framework of industrial, agricultural, and tourist companies. We are striving to promote these projects. I cite for example the Arab Industrial and Agricultural Company based in Damascus, which implements projects in Arab countries, including Libya and Saudi Arabia; the Arab Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company, which includes Syria, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries; and the Arab Investment Company in which all Arab countries participate.

[Al-Sa'id] Many people have the impression that the public sector in Syria dominates the economy in Syria.

[Yasin] One of the characteristics of the economy in Syria is its multifaceted nature, contrary to some people's belief that the Syrian economy relies on the public sector. Our economy combines the public sector, private sector, cooperative sector, and joint sector. Each of these sectors has a role and is required to participate in the production cycle. The Syrian Government's goal will continue to be preparing the ground for all these sectors to play their assigned role and contribute with their potential and resources to the production cycle. For example, in tourism, the joint sector has 85 percent. Generally speaking, we open the door to every field and prepare the ground. The private sector can establish any industries it wants. Every sector participates in activities according to its potential and resources.

[Al-Sa'id] What about the size of the budget?

[Yasin] The budget totals 134 billion Syrian pounds, of which public sector investment amounts to 67 billion Syrian pounds.

[Al-Sa'id] What about issues that have not been settled and that you are trying to address?

[Yasin] We have solved numerous issues and made many achievements. But there are still issues that require solutions, such as standardizing the exchange rate, since we have three rates for the U.S. dollar: the official rate of $11, the tourist rate of $23, and a parallel rate of $43. It is important to standardize the rate.

[Al-Sa'id] How far has Syria succeeded in striking a balance regarding trade, revenues, and expenditure?

[Yasin] We have taken steps toward achieving a balance in the balance of trade and payment and the balance between revenues and expenditure in the state's general budget. Regarding the issue of economic reform, we have opted for a step-by-step policy to obtain the best results with the least negative effects. We avoided the policy of going too far too quickly. Our policies score major achievements with extremely limited negative effects.

[Al-Sa'id] What about debts?

[Yasin] Our debts are mostly for particular projects, so we obtained these loans and spent the money on establishing projects. Some of these loans have already been invested and others will be invested. The issue of foreign debts is not a primary issue in Syria. We obtained loans with easy repayment terms and we used them in projects.

[Al-Sa'id] Are there pending issues with the International Monetary Fund [IMF]?

[Yasin] There are no pending issues. We are a member of the IMF but we did not discuss reform programs with it. We only hold talks with the IMF on repaying debts used for projects.

Media View Peace Process, Israeli Behavior

Rabin Tour Shows 'War Mentality'

JN2012074994 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 20 Dec 94

[From the press review]

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[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, TISHRIN comments on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's latest tour, which included Japan and South Korea, saying the tour shows that Rabin's conduct is still controlled by a war mentality.

The paper says Rabin is obsessed with the continuation of aggression and expansion. This is why he is working to provide the global requirements for carrying out an aggressive Zionist scheme in the region and besiege his Arab enemies, including the Arab resistance forces, and deprive them of the means of self-defense.

Rabin also seeks to find new allies in that part of the world to support his government's intransigent stands, which reject withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories on the pretext of security needs.

The paper says Japan has so far adopted a balanced policy toward the Arab-Zionist conflict, which has achieved for it great material and political gains.

The paper hopes that Japan's policy will not fall into the Israeli trap set by Rabin and that it will pursue its previous policy. The paper asserts that peace has not been achieved yet and that the factors of instability—represented in occupation and Israel's policy of aggression—have not changed.

Israel 'Obstructing' Peace

JN2012170694 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear Listeners: Every now and then Israeli officials complain about the slow pace of the U.S.-mediated talks with Syria in an exposed attempt to blame Syria and disavow their obvious responsibility for obstructing the peace process. Such falsification is not new in the acts of the Israeli officials. They are used to saying one thing and then doing the opposite. Since 1948, the Israelis have been raising their voices and asking the Arabs for peace. But when the objective conditions for just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the resolutions of international legitimacy became available, they shunned peace and began asking for security and even using it as a pretext to hold on to the Arab territories and build settlements on them.

Nobody doubts that Syria is eager to regain the Golan Heights, occupied since 1967, and that it is in its interest to push the peace talks forward in order to reach a just and comprehensive peace that can return its land and rights. By urging an acceleration of the talks, the Israeli officials want Syria to relinquish its land, rights, and even part of the Golan; to accept Israel's unfair conditions; and to be drawn into unilateral deals. The limited self-rule experiment has proved to people near and far that such deals endanger the desired stable peace in the Middle East and threaten prospects for a real, lasting, and firm solution.

Since the Washington peace talks began more three years ago, Syria has made a series of constructive, balanced, and objective proposals to promote the peace process and produce tangible results on the ground. Israel, however, refuses to carry out a total withdrawal from the occupied territories, thereby creating a stumbling block on the road to peace. Syria has repeatedly proposed the formula of total peace for total withdrawal in translation of the land-for-peace principle. The world community welcomed this formula and considered it the only basis for a just, firm peace. U.S. President Clinton himself announced from Damascus that it was impossible to bring about a just and comprehensive peace without implementing UN Security Council resolutions organizing the peace process. These resolutions ban any side from occupying land, changing its character, and building settlements on it.

But Israel has turned a deaf ear to these proposals and continued the policy of procrastination and blaming others, particularly Syria and Lebanon. These allegations did not and will not deceive anybody. In Israel itself, government officials raise their voices and hold Rabin responsible for obstructing the establishment of a true, firm peace in the Middle East and resuming large-scale settlement operations in the occupied territories in conflict with the essence of the peace process and the commitments it has made to the United States.

Syria is eager to render the peace process successful, regain its occupied territories, and end the ordeal of the displaced Syrian citizens who, since 1967 have been awaiting the day when they can return to their homes and villages. Syria will never relinquish its land and the right of its sons to regain all their property and will never make bargains with Israel over the Golan or any other occupied Arab territories. The bases of just and comprehensive peace are known, namely, the resolutions of international legitimacy. Firm, stable peace is the true guarantee of security. Israel must not depart from the entire world community, must not demand rights other than its own, and must not try to amend the charters of this community in order to make its hostile expansionist actions legal.

Occupation and expansion are rejected and condemned as hostile actions, and there will be no peace without the full removal of aggression. The Arabs need security more than Israel because they are the victims of aggression.

Israeli 'Allegations' on Lebanon Seen

JN1912074994 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 19 Dec 94

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "True Peace Can Only Be Just, Comprehensive," AL-BA'TH says: The resolutions of the United Nations on Palestine, the Golan, and the Middle East issue in general, as well as the resolutions issued by the Islamic summit conference

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last week on the same issues, reaffirm the basic, unchanging principles of the Middle East peace process. These resolutions also confirm Israel's ever-growing international isolation on account of its recalcitrant positions and provocative approach that is at odds with the peace process.

AL-BA'TH says these resolutions assert afresh that the entire international family is convinced that peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through international law and legitimacy. These resolutions also emphasize that any attempt to depart from this rule will only result—as the examples of the self-rule agreement and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty show—in undermining the objective foundations of the peace process and creating new flashpoints.

The paper further asserts that these resolutions lend great moral and material international support to the constant, principled Syrian position on the peace process. Right from the start, the participation of Damascus in this process has been based on clear, specific foundations, namely, that the required peace for the region is a just and comprehensive one based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Despite all Israeli pressures and maneuvers, Syria has held fast to its principled position, rejecting, in part and parcel, all offers that seek to divide peace and produce a separate agreement with Israel, just like what happened with the PLO and Jordan. These separate agreements have created more predicaments and tension and produced negative repercussions, especially in the Palestinian arena. This shows the soundness and integrity of Syria's positions and proves beyond doubt that peace can only be achieved through the resolutions of international legitimacy and in line with the foundations and principles of the peace process.

TISHRIN comments on the statements of Israeli officials in which they allege that Syria still supports terrorist organizations in southern Lebanon.

The paper says any objective examination of such statements by Rabin and other Israeli officials on Syria's stands and policies reveals a number of facts. This shows that Israel's allegations have increased recently and been accompanied by lies and misleading claims through which Israel seeks to cast doubt on Syria's central, pivotal role in the peace process and undermine its constant principles and eagerness to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. In addition, Rabin and other Israeli officials seek deliberately and in bad faith to bypass some basic principles about resisting occupation and Israel's flimsy pretexts to maintain this occupation.

Elaborating on these facts, TISHRIN says: First, international legitimacy has supported, and stressed the need for, resisting occupation. No doubt, when the Lebanese national resistance pursues its approach and keeps up its resistance against the Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon, it thus confirms the right of the people of Lebanon to their territory and rights. Second, Syria has emphasized its great eagerness to reach a just and comprehensive peace. It has also linked the future of the Golan to that of southern Lebanon and called for full Israeli withdrawal in return for comprehensive peace. Third, Rabin's acknowledgement that a solution in the south must be political necessitates that he should first call a halt to aggressive provocations and terrorist pressures.

TISHRIN concludes by asserting that Syria stands in one trench with Lebanon to enable it to regain its territory, and supports Lebanon's quest for accord, security, and peace. Syria shall not abandon its pan-Arab duties in championing the people of Lebanon as they resist and oppose occupation. Syria shall also adhere to its pan-Arab principles by shouldering, in a fraternal spirit, responsibility for adhering to the constants of a just and comprehensive solution.

Gaza-Jericho Seen 'Dying Already'

JN2112073094 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 21 Dec 94

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary entitled "The Catastrophe," TISHRIN notes recent statements by Yasir 'Arafat in which he said that if the situation continues as it is under his authority, the Palestinian people will make a move, especially in Gaza. He also said: We are heading toward a catastrophe.

TISHRIN says the catastrophe 'Arafat is now talking about started when the Palestinian party distanced itself from coordination among the Arab parties concerned with the peace process and engaged in separate and secret talks with the Israelis to sign humiliating, separate deals that gave Israel all its demands at the expense of the Palestinian people and their cause, rights, and dignity.

TISHRIN stresses that events and developments reveal that the situation in the occupied territories has become very dangerous and intolerable because of the great harm the Oslo Agreement inflicted on the Palestinian people, their aspirations, objectives, and sacrifices. Israel succeeded in placing the fate of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in turmoil because of the Oslo Agreement, and after that pushed the Palestinian party into ceaseless concessions and relinquishment of rights and aspirations. This fact is now revealed by the impotent negotiations between the self-rule authority and the Israelis.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: Israel is now refusing to withdraw. It also refuses to transfer powers and to discuss the settlements and settlers issue. It further refuses to discuss Jerusalem in the second phase, and

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even in the final phase talks. Israel insists on only one thing—to transform the Palestinian Police Force into a tool of suppression and liquidation of the intifadah. All these facts confirm that 'Arafat's agreement with the Israelis is still in a deadlock, and all developments confirm that that agreement will remain so. It may even have started dying already, although no official announcement to that effect has been made.

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Afghanistan

India May Reopen Embassy, Provide Assistance

LD2012181194 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 0230 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] India will cooperate with the Islamic State of Afghanistan in economic health and cultural fields. This point was expressed in separate meetings between Mr. Badra Kumar, head of Asian relations in the External Affairs Ministry of India, and esteemed Sadroddin Sahar, acting minister and deputy minister of public health, and with Dr Mohaiddin Mahdi, deputy minister of planning. In the course of those meetings the two sides talked about the possibility of India's cooperation in the fields of the provision of fuel and food for the residents of Kabul city, the reopening of India's embassy in Kabul, the dispatch of 50 Afghan students to India, the provision of artificial limbs to the maimed, and the supply of the Indira Gandhi Children Medical Institute with medical instruments and medicine. The Indian side expressed its country's readiness in this respect.

India

Fertilizer Venture Agreement Signed With Israel

BK2112041694 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Israel have agreed to explore the possibility of setting up joint venture fertilizer projects in third countries where cheap raw material and resources are available. This was decided at a meeting between the chemicals and fertilizers minister, Mr. Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav, and the visiting Israeli minister for trade and industry, Mr. Mikha Harish, in New Delhi yesterday.

Later, Mr. Mikha Harish met the external affairs minister, Mr. Dinesh Singh. They expressed satisfaction at the growth of bilateral trade and joint ventures in various sectors.

Minister Says ISI Using Nepal for Infiltration

BK2112104794 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has reports that the Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI [Inter Services Intelligence], has been helping Kashmiri militants in using Nepal for infiltration, visit, and reinforce their contacts in Pakistan.

The minister of state for home, Mr. P.M. Sayeed, said this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today. He said New Delhi has informed the Government of Nepal about this issue. Mr. Sayeed said police stations and immigration checkposts on Indo-Nepal border have been alerted to check infiltration. Border security and policing have also been tightened all along the border.

Iran

Rafsanjani Discusses Gulf Issues at Seminar

'Sincere Negotiations' Stressed

LD2012174894 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In a meeting with the participants of the Seminar on Horizon for Cooperation in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed: No country benefits from insecurity and instability, and regional countries should resort to dignity, goodwill, and sincere and brotherly cooperation so that they do not provide others with the pretext to come and interfere.

The president said: The Persian Gulf—which is a strategic region and provides a great part of the world's energy and fuel—is vital to the people of the region and the world. Whatever happens here will affect the whole world directly or indirectly.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani noted: The Persian Gulf problems should be solved and resolved through sincere negotiations between regional countries, and we believe that the current differences of opinion could be removed through patience, dignity, and cooperation.

The president said: The bitter experiences of adventurism and resorting to military force that we have witnessed in the past decade have inflicted heavy losses on the countries and the people of this region. The Iraqi aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait, as well as the past events in the countries of the former Soviet Union, provide good lessons for the history of humanity that can always be used as reference points.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani added: Under the present conditions, one cannot impose one's ideas and wishes on others by resorting to bullying and the might of weapons. Therefore, all efforts must be directed toward finding peaceful solutions for disputes.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed: Bringing to the surface some old baseless claims, which are being put forward by certain countries despite the fact that such claims usually cause tension and agitation, will lead to bad experiences and undesirable consequences. They will, moreover, bring about the presence and the intervention of foreigners in the region, and this will in turn undermine the security of these countries. This is something that we are witnessing at present.

The president said: As a country with an extensive border on the Persian Gulf, and as a nation that has endured eight years of war under the hardest conditions at a time when some regional countries supported the aggressor, we have never pursued the path of adventurism. Moreover, contrary to the venomous propaganda by the media of the superpowers, we had been trying to

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prevent insecurity in the Persian Gulf and international waterways, and we were eager to ensure that oil and other commodities were passing intact through the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. However, the powers behind Iraq wanted to deprive us of such security.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani added: Creation of insecurity on the sea in pursuance of war objectives was, and still is, a simple task. However, our fundamental policy right from the outset has been that security and stability in the Persian Gulf is essential for the whole world. We have been making endeavors toward the materialization of this policy.

The president then referred to the ongoing summit of the heads of the Persian Gulf littoral states in Bahrain and expressed the hope that the summit may adopt a joint decision on sincere and fraternal cooperation between the countries of the region within the framework of Islamic and humanitarian tenets and principles.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani referred to the difficult situation that the Iraqi people are facing and mentioned: We believe that it is up to us to decide to hold talks with Iraq in order to form the foundations of a solid cooperation so that there will be no need to bear heavy costs and no need for military expeditions by foreign and major powers to the region.

At the beginning of the meeting, Foreign Affairs Minister Velayati, presented a report on the outcome of the fifth Seminar on Horizon for Cooperation in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman to the president.

Suggests Talks With Iraq

LD2012230794 Tehran IRNA in English 2148 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 20, IRNA—Participants in the fifth seminar on 'Horizons for Cooperation in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman' here today met with President Hojatoleslam 'Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

President Rafsanjani said to the group of visitors that include experts from many countries, that instability in the Persian Gulf will not be to the benefit of any country, and that the Persian Gulf states must make it impossible for other world powers to offer an excuse for having a presence in the region.

He said the Persian Gulf has the bulk of the world's energy and fuel reserves and is a strategically important region. He said any development in the Persian Gulf will directly or indirectly affect the whole world.

President Rafsanjani added that the Islamic Republic of Iran maintains that differences in outlooks, if any, between the Persian Gulf states can be solved with patience and cooperation.

He said under the present circumstances no one power will be able to impose its viewpoints on other countries by resort to force or threats. Therefore, he added, all nations should strive for solving differences amicably and peacefully.

He said the voicing of old and unfounded claims that are usually provocative, normally lead to bitter experiences and help the coming to the region of foreign powers and hence a threat to the security of the Persian Gulf states.

President Rafsanjani said as the country with the longest coast on the Persian Gulf, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never advocated adventurism, despite the fact of its having been involved in an unwanted war for almost eight years and despite the provocative support given to the aggressor party by certain Persian Gulf states.

He expressed hope that the heads of the Persian Gulf states now meeting in Bahrain would agree on a common decision on the need for cooperation between the regional countries within the framework of Islam and consistent with humanitarian principles.

Referring to the difficult situation being faced by the people of Iraq he said Islamic Iran believes that talks should be initiated with Iraq to find a secure cooperation, thereby making it unnecessary for countries of the region to shoulder the cost of foreign troops sent to the Persian Gulf region.

In the same meeting, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati offered a report to the president on the result of the fifth seminar here on prospect of cooperation in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

Article Views Rafsanjani Support, Khamene'i Power

95LA0050A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 6 Nov 94 pp 24-30

[Article by Nura Fakhuri: "Iran: People Support Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Khamene'i Makes the Decisions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJALLAH visited Iran recently in an attempt to find answers to several questions that have emerged on the political, economic, and social scene. We have returned with a group of interviews and reports. This is the first one.

One enters Iran after a lapse of 10 years to find 20 million new people. During the 15 years since the revolution, Iranian women have given birth to 20 million children who, today, comprise one-third of Iranian society, which numbers some 60 million people. They are Iran's new face and one of its most important social, economic, and political problems. Most of them have not reached the age of productivity, but their ability to consume is high. The inability to attain their demands and satisfy their aspirations makes them a time bomb waiting to explode.

In Iran, one can feel their pressure on the streets of Tehran and in its schools and institutes. The capital,

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ringed by desolate mountains, harbors 11 million Iranians by day, who work, eat, and drink there. After working hours, 5 million leave to return to the distant suburbs, while the other 6 million sleep in their homes.

Despite the manifestations of the revolution, its symbols and slogans (for example, a small district in the southern suburb of Beirut, a stronghold of Hizballah, reflects the spirit of the Iranian Revolution far more than any of its symbols inside Iran), Tehran has changed in the eyes of its visitor of 10 years ago. According to data, it has the second highest rate of pollution in the world after Mexico.

Everyone in Iran gasps for breath. Some, naturally, are gasping from the pollution, but the majority do that because of the cost of living and speculation in the price of the dollar. The two are connected. Everyone complains about high prices (prices might seem moderate to the visitor, but they are exorbitant to the Iranian, who receives his salary in Iranian rials. The burning fire of prices came after eight years of cannon fire and war. When you talk with some Tehranis about their dreams, including some whom I know dreamt about the revolution and worked to achieve it, they tell you: Ideology and dreams of revolution have collided with harsh reality, stemming from a destructive war and an isolation that has continued for years.

The speaker does not finish, but rather he looks around mournfully and summarizes his concerns by saying: "I am a civil engineer, and my salary is not sufficient for me. After a long day's work, I work at night repairing old automobiles. I buy them at low cost, repair them, and try to resell them. But the rapid daily inflation (no official in Iran will agree to fix the daily, monthly, or annual rate of inflation) is so great that I don't know how I can make a profit. The car that I sell today for 4 million Iranian tomans (the toman is 10 Iranian rials [R]; 270 tomans equals $1) I cannot buy tomorrow at the same price. Everything here is sold on the black market, even medicine. Some pharmacists say that that drug is unavailable, but when they are offered many times its cost, the required drug is available once again."

The solution? My interlocutor looks at me as though I am searching for the impossible. He says: "Matters have been different since Ayatollah Khomeyni died. I don't think anyone will try to change [this situation] for several reasons, including the fact that the people have tried revolution and have been frustrated. Today they would prefer to suffer and interact with the various types of oppression to which they have become accustomed. No one in Iran today can live on the pay of one job. Some work 18 hours a day to provide the minimum."

North and South

Tehran has expanded and spread. It would be overcrowded to the extent of vertical gridlock, were it not for the gardens. The new mayor of Tehran, Gholam Hosein Karbaschi, has concerned himself with reorganizing, equipping, and planting them with roses, as well as creating playgrounds for children. Despite Karbaschi's efforts (which are most popular and appreciated in Tehran) the people of Tehran are grateful to him because he is trying to restore beauty to their city. After a trip southward and another to the north, the observer has a question and a conclusion. The question is: What has the revolution done for the so-called oppressed people of the south? As for the conclusion, it is that the south is south and the north is north. Wherever one went in the south, the poverty and misery were frightening, but the more one penetrated northward toward Mohasseni square the more one was surrounded by magnificent shops, restaurants, furniture showrooms, and European clothing boutiques.

In the south, the symbol of the revolution is the black chadur, which covers the shameful face of poverty. One feels for a moment that the chadur has been converted into a garage for the motorbikes, which are the cheapest means of transportation. In the north, jeans take the place of the chadur, covered by a long colorful robe or dress. The head covering does not match. The "Daughters of Zaynab" (the women's organization to ban the forbidden) no longer watch for pretty women or hold them accountable except in the holy months.

Employees of governmental offices live in the midst of the south. The authorities try to win them over to their side by granting incentives in view of the high cost of living. If you are an employee with a limited income, $50 is added to your modest salary which doubles it more than a sack of rice or a tin of butter or a shirt without a collar (which, in Iran, is called a diplomatic shirt), so that you are not tempted that day by the hated "necktie," the symbol of the West's arrogance. As an employee in a revolutionary republican office, you can spend a holiday in the beautiful area of Qazvin, Mashad, or Khazar [Caspian Sea beaches] (seized after the revolution) at token prices. The new rich people and senior officials live in the north, as well as certain original inhabitants of the Shemran Mountain area.

I put this question to several persons: What is the difference between the poor before the revolution and the poor today? I received two answers. The first was from a young university woman, who is working in public service. She said: "Nothing has changed; the poor are still poor. Probably they are poorer, because prices have gone up. But he is not neglected. Through the 'coupon' system he can feed his family despite long waits in front of cooperatives to spend these coupons."

The second answer came from a worker in a hotel, who was angry at the situation. He said: "Forget the poor; ask me about the wealthy. The shah and his entourage lived in the north. The houses of all the ministers and ruling mullahs are now in the north. Khomeyni considered the Shemran area a symbol of everything he wanted to fight, but he died in one of its houses. That day they said that the doctors had advised him to go to Shemran because its

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climate was pleasant. However, his son and family have not returned to Qom. Khomeyni's family still lives in the north."

Policy Decision

If the Iranian man-on-the-street knows and discusses the situation and, sometimes, loudly criticizes it, he refers to two basic points that destroy the articulation of the economic and political situation in Iran. This is the dual phenomenon of policymaking and the worsening corruption.

From taxi drivers to advisers of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, everyone responds, when asked about this dualism, in accordance with his language and understanding of affairs. The taxi driver says: "This is our main problem. The president says something, and the leader of the revolution contradicts him."

Who do you believe is correct and to whom does the man in the street listen? The taxi driver adds: "We prefer Hashemi-Rafsanjani of course, because he wants to give us more freedom, and he wants to open up to the West and improve the economy."

An intellectual, who is close to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, summarizes the weakness in present Iranian policy by saying: "Let's describe this dualism that everyone talks about from different viewpoints. Strategy is one, and Ayatollah Khamene'i and President Hashemi-Rafsanjani agree on it. However, their tactics vary. What is being said about a struggle for power is incorrect, because the struggle is basically over. Decisionmaking belongs to the Vali-ye Faqih [Supreme Jurisprudent], Ayatollah Khamene'i, as the leader of the revolution. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani is the president of a republic like Bani Sadr, and the final authority is not his."

But, is the pragmatic president being changed into "Bani Sadr the second"?

One observer who is familiar with events inside the Office of the President in Pasteur Street says: "Hashemi-Rafsanjani is an experienced politician, and the wind is now against him. In order to achieve the promises he made to the people concerning openness, liberation, prosperity, and growth, he must stay on for a third term after the end of his second term in Spring 1997. This is impossible according to the Iranian Constitution. Hashemi-Rafsanjani is now trying to satisfy the hard-line votes inside and outside of the Majles al-Shura. Despite the clamor of many, no one in Iran is seriously striving for the office of presidency, because it is a difficult spot."

The creators of the following scenario expect that after the issue of changing the Constitution is decided and Hashemi-Rafsanjani continues in power until 2002, many matters will be changed. Unless he fails to create change, it is certain that his successor will be his protege. Returning to the hard line in light of the conditions in which we live will not be productive. The crisis of government today is in its unspecialized cadres. You might find an engineer as director of a hospital, or a doctor working in an office. The cause of this is religious ranks. Hashemi-Rafsanjani rejects this method and is trying to encourage specialization.

Corruption and Bribery

Like its rugs, Iran remains complex and contradictory in its colors, policy, and society. The people who assure you of the average man's affection for Hashemi-Rafsanjani also enumerate the symbols of corruption in Tehran and, at the head of the list, are the president's sons. These people say that his sons are agents for Korean companies, including the Supra Company, and are agents for Coca Cola which, because of that, was permitted to resume production in Iran. They repeat stories and rumors about the sons' lives and the methods by which they control the black market and dollar rates.

Since life has become increasingly difficult in Iran, corruption is increasing. In a speech given by Ahmed Khomeyni, the imam's son, on a Thursday night at the Behesht-e Zahara Cemetery, where visitors to his father's tomb gather, he said: "We no longer fear opponents of the revolution. Rather, we have started to fear the new terrorists who buy and sell, and corrupt the markets of Tehran. We must eliminate the economic terrorists."

From time to time, the government tries to make a show of fighting corruption. Work is stopped in the dollar market, on the pretext of finding counterfeit dollars. Panic sets in, and merchants hoard basic commodities and only sell them on the black market. Consequently, the people's suffering increases instead of being eased.

Bribery and corruption are not restricted to buying and selling either in the market or in government offices. They are not confined to the upper classes—if the term may be used—i.e., those supported by the revolution and those who are profiting from it. Any Iranian to whom you talk, and to whom you say that you are afraid of encountering a problem on the street or at the airport with security, will rub his fingers together (the symbol of money), indicating that the solution lies in paying.

I asked a young man if he went out for fun with his friends. Of course, he replied. When I asked him about problems, he said: "So long as you carry rials, the problem with police is resolved."

It is well known that young Iranians suffer from many social problems, including drug abuse and the frustration that leads many of them to suicide, as well as begging and depravity. The positive thing in dealing with negative factors in Iran these days is that officials do not deny them, but rather recognize them and try to deal with them.

Let us go back to the time bomb. Twenty million Iranians from the time of revolution, most of whom are not over 16. Is there a tomorrow for them? How will they

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form Iran's future? What will they do with the revolution, which has encouraged their parents to "hatch them" in order to fight the "arrogant ones"? Will they be compensated for martyrdom and for being killed in war?

This group of youngsters are suffering despite the Iranian Government's attempts to give them services, like athletic fields, children's playgrounds, and group trips. This suffering begins in schools, which operate daily in two shifts. The morning group is from 0700 to 1300, while the second shift is from 1400 to 1900. There is also a crisis on the university level. The Iranian Government recently decided to impose a fine on each student who fails the examination. After university, there is the dreadful and worsening unemployment crisis.

One who has lived through Iran's anger—the revolution—and tries to compare those days with today, notes that the eight years of war absorbed a large part of that anger. The distinguishing characteristic of the Iranian scene, of the condition that prevails there, is a mixture of sadness and fatigue.

Commodity Prices in Tehran

- Flat loaf of bread (Barbari, the most popular): R13 = $.01
- Kg of mutton: R6,000 = $3
- Kg of chicken: R3,500 = $1.65
- Kg of fish: R7,000 = $3.25
- Kg of Rice: R2,500 = $1
- 4 liters of vegetable oil: R22,000 = $9
- Tin of butter: R18,000 = $6
- Apartment rental (5 persons): R3 million = $125
- Cost of a small used car: R40 million = $1,800
- Liter of gasoline: R50 = $.03
- Price of a chadur: R40,000 = $15
- Kg of tea: R8,000 = $3.90
- Kg of sugar: R2,500 = $1
- Kg of white Tabrizi cheese: R6,000 = $3

Energy Head Supports Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

Amrollahi Seeks Nuclear-Free Mideast

LD2012220694 Tehran IRNA in English 2140 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 20, (IRNA)—Head of Iran's atomic energy organization, (Reza Amrollahi), said here on Tuesday [20 December] that new decisions will be made on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) due to expire next year.

Speaking at a press conference at the end of a seminar on the legal and political aspects of NPT, (Amrollahi) said some signatories want to extend the treaty, but, the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks removal of discriminatory measures regarding implementation of Article 4 of NPT.

He said according to Article 4 of the treaty, non-nuclear states have the right to launch research, produce and make use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and enjoy necessary assistance in this regard.

Article 4 of NPT envisages the right of nations to enjoy nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the need for cooperation between the nations to produce nuclear energy, he said.

(Amrollahi) said that the Islamic Republic of Iran supports NPT and hopes for seeing implementation of the said article with no discrimination.

On Iran's proposals for a nuclear free zone in the Middle East and equal treatment of regional states, he deplored that the Zionist regime accpets the NPT nor allows the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect its nuclear installations.

(Amrollahi), who is a deputy to President Rafsanjani, said Iran also calls for peaceful activities without any exception, security guarantees by nuclear states on not attacking others, timetable for complete nuclear disarmament and a ban on production and stockpiling of materials used in producing nuclear arms.

'Prejudice' Seen in NPT

LD2012180194 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran calls for the removal of existing bias in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] and emphasizes the need for nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Reza Amrollahi, head of Iran's atomic energy organization, announced that 90 percent of the world countries have signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty thus far. The treaty is due to be renewed next year. Iran and a number of other signatory states are calling for amendment and removal of prejudice in the text of the treaty. He added: Iran believes in creating a nuclear free zone in the Middle East, presenting of a fixed and specific timetable for a general nuclear disarmament, and using atomic energy for peaceful purposes in all the member countries of the treaty in a fair manner.

Agriculture Minister Says Country Needs GATT

LD2112120794 Tehran IRNA in English 1152 GMT 21 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 21, IRNA— Minister of Agriculture, 'Isa Kalantari, says that Iran should cede to the General Agreement on Tarrif and Trade (GATT) so that it could participate in international trade enterprises alongside other countries.

In an exclusive interview with the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' during agriculture week, he said that "membership in GATT would afford good opportunity for sectors of the economy which enjoy global markets."

Saying that Iran's membership in GATT may have some disavantages in the short term, he stressed that it would

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in the long run pave the way for growth and development in domestic products and the export of goods.

"A meeting of agricultural ministers of Islamic countries would convene in Tehran January 14, attracting representatives from 50 countries," Kalantari said, adding that it would focus on Islamic countries' food security, a higher investment in food production, mutual research cooperation, optimal use of production facilities, sound utilization of water resources and environment conservation."

The minister further pointed out that during the first development plan about dlrs. 4.8 billion was invested in Iran's agricultural field and consequently the Islamic Republic had reached self-sufficiency, remarking that 84 percent of food production was domestic, higher than the 75 percent slated at the beginning of the plan.

He added that "during the first plan, Iran's agricultural production had a fixed annual growth rate exceeding 6 percent. Over the same period iran's agricultural exports were dlrs. 3.5 b."

"Given the activities undertaken in the first plan and the policies of the second plan, Iran's agriculture will find its true place and set the wheels of economy into motion," he concluded.

GATT Membership Said To Boost Textile Industry

LD2012144794 Tehran IRNA in English 1103 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 20, IRNA—A morning daily Tuesday [20 December] said that the status and position of the textile industry in the country could be further illuminated given the possibility of Iran's membership in the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) and the significance that GATT attaches to this industry.

Referring to inauguration of the third international textile and leather machinery fair on Sunday the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' quoted Industries Minister Mohammad Reza Ne'matzadeh as saying that the first 5-year development plan's investment in the textile industry was dlrs. one billion.

"Iran's textile industry, enjoying special advantages from both industrial and historical perspectives, can be called 'strategic', the paper noted.

During the first plan, [passage indistinct]

Nevertheless, Iran has not seen optimal efforts to promote this industry when compared with its importance and status in domestic and global economy, the editorial said.

Along with the carpet and petrochemical industries, textiles can upgrade Iran's economy in many areas, it said adding that Iran's annual textile exports amount to dlrs. 180 million, an insignificant figure keeping in mind that this industry can generate employment, make optimum use of machinery and create productivity.

Like other countries, Iran should zero in on this industry and guard against loss and inappropriate utlization of capital, manpower, machinery and so on, it commented.

Riyadh Radio Said Broadcasting 'Lies'

LD1912222194 Tehran IRNA in English 2151 GMT 19 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 19, IRNA—The Saudis faced with a crippling crisis are busy trying to deceive public opinion inside the country. In their latest lies, the state-run Riyadh radio said last night that peddlers in the Iranian city of Karaj occupied the municipality building of the city in protest against the 'heavy taxes' levied upon them. For anyone with an iota of commonsense it is crystal clear how the peddlers who hawk their merchandise on pavements and have no business address are liable to taxation and how could the tax collector keep track of these men on the move to collect taxes?

The fabricated story broadcast by Riyadh radio in its Arabic service, was borrowed from the radio station of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) which operates from Baghdad. At least the people in Karaj know the baselessness of the story.

As part of its preposterous lies Riyadh radio qouted an unnamed Iranian civilian as saying that the Karaj manucipality was still under occupation of the peddlers, whereas, the fact is, staff members of Karaj manucipality are busy carrying their routine duties unaware of the fables in circulation about them by Riyadh and the MKO.

In another tall tale, Riyadh radio said students of Tehran University held a demonstration on Sunday [18 December] demanding improvement of living conditions in the country. The story drew peels of laughter from students, teachers and the administration of Tehran University.

Riyadh radio is busy carrying distorted stories at a time when Saudi Arabia is being dragged into growing economic and social doldrums, while unrest looms large on its borders especially on the south with Yemen.

In a clash two weeks ago on the Saudi-Yemenese borders, described by news agencies as "bloody", two Saudi soldiers were wounded. The simmering dispute continues between the two neighbouring states. Over the recent days, the London dailies, 'GUARDIAN' and the 'INDEPENDENT' and the German weekly 'DER SPIEGEL', published reports of social unrest and disorder in Saudi Arabia, and surveyed the causes behind the social disarray in that country.

The international media has pointed to the similarities between the current situation in Saudi Arabia and that of

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Iran in the 1970s which led to the collapse of the upstart Pahlavi regime. Like the Pahlavis, who were relative newcomers on the political scene of Iran (1923-1979), the house of Saud also owes its seizure of power in the Arabian Peninsula to the British. Prior to the 1930s Saudi Arabia did not exist on the world map.

King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the head of ruling family, Saudi Arabia in a meeting with the princes last November admitted that domestic dissidents is on the rise in the northern parts of the country.

According to Arab lawyers in London thousands of Saudis are languishing in Saudi jails, which fact, is an open secret for human rights organizations. The opponents of the ruling regime who see the house of Saud in a crippling position, say in Europe that they demand establishemnt of a republican system in the country and are against the system of the present tribal rule which belongs to the middle-ages.

U.S. Claims of Breaking Iraq Embargo Denied

LD2012133394 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 20 Dec 94

[Unattributed commentary: "No Stone Unturned by Iran in Enforcing UN Sanctions on Iraq"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, Mr. Kamal Kharrazi, in his 15 December letter, has informed the UN Security Council affiliated committee monitoring the embargo imposed against Iraq, of Iraq's continued illegal acts in violating the Islamic Republic's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as the Iraqi Government's violations of the sanctions imposed on that government.

The U.S. Administration, in this connection, by sending a letter to the UN Security Council sanctions' committee, and by ignoring the Islamic Republic of Iran's deterrent measures in preventing such Iraqi acts, has considered Iran as responsible for the partial violation of the economic embargo imposed against Iraq.

Aside from the one-sided stand of the United States against the Islamic Republic in the recent letter of U.S. officials to the United Nations, there are certain important points in connection with the matter which ought to be pondered upon before making any prejudgement and wrong decisions. What has been authenticated in Mr. Kharrazi's recent letter to the United Nations is nothing new, since in his 25 June letter, too, he had informed the UN secretary general of the Iraqi violations, and had stipulated that the Islamic Republic of Iran had strengthened its coastal guards to stop the violations of the sanctions imposed against Iraq. The Islamic Republic had also undertaken in seizing several vessels that used to carry Iraqi goods under the Iranian flag and fictitious bills of lading in the name of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran has also followed up the matter through international legal channels and has informed the UN sanctions' committee of these measures.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which was itself a victim of Iraqi aggression and imposed war, has so far left no stone unturned in the full enforcement of the UN decisions and the implementation of all the UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq. The Islamic Republic of Iran has also repeatedly called for the UN officials' serious measures to get Resolution No. 598 fully enforced. And in this connection the Islamic Republic of Iran has time and again shown its good will and cooperation.

At present, Mr. Kharrazi, in his letter to the United Nations, underlined the same point: That the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to honor its international commitments vis-a-vis the UN-imposed sanctions against Iraq, and is observing the same commitments.

Cautious Stance Adopted Toward Crisis in Bahrain

NC2012154994 Paris AFP in English 1412 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 20 (AFP)—Iran, which once considered Bahrain as one of its provinces, has adopted a cautious stand over the violence in the neighboring Gulf state, allowing the Tehran-based opposition to speak while keeping an official silence.

After two weeks of clashes between Bahraini security forces and the Shiite Muslim demonstrators, Iranian leaders have avoided comment on the situation and the official media simply published foreign news reports on developments.

Only the Islamic hardline newspaper, Jomhuri-ye Eslami, ran a brief editorial on Sunday [18 December] urging Bahraini leaders to show "tact and political wisdom" to resolve the conflict peacefully.

The media in this Shiite-majority country have also refrained from mentioning that the Shiite Muslims in Bahrain are pitted against the Sunni Muslim authorities.

Iran is usually vocal in its defence of Muslims, particularly Shiites.

An Arab diplomat in Tehran attributed Tehran's silence to an "unwillingness to open a new front and source of tension in the region."

He was referring to an existing dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over the three islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tonb and Lesser Tonb in the southern Gulf.

The rioting in Bahrain had coincided with a summit of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, which opened in Manama on Monday. Among topics to be discussed are relations between the Gulf Arab states and Iran.

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Political observers here said that Tehran may have decided to wait for the result of the three-day meeting in Bahrain before it adopted a stand in favor of Bahraini Shiites.

The trouble in Bahrain flared on December 12, a week after the arrest of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman, a former student of the Koranic College in the Iranian holy city of Qom.

The demonstrators are demanding the release of Shaykh 'Ali, who had called for the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975.

Security forces shot dead five demonstrators and four policemen also died in clashes which peaked over the weekend, the banned Shiite opposition Islamic Front for Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) said.

The IFLB has issued statements here giving casualty figures for the unrest and details of the Bahraini authorities' crackdown.

Diplomatic sources in Bahrain said Tuesday that almost 1,600 people had been rounded up.

According to the authorities in Bahrain, the Shiites make up 35 percent of the population, while independent estimates put the figure at between 55 and 60 percent.

The unrest in the archipelago of Bahrain is the worst the former British protectorate has seen since it became independent in 1971.

The islands, in the southwestern Gulf, were dominated by Iran before the British rule and, up until 1971, Bahrain was named as Iran's 14th province in history textbooks here.

As the British protectorate in Bahrain drew to a close, the United Nations sent a team there at Iran's request to find out what sort of government the population desired. It concluded that "almost all" Bahrainis wanted an independent, Arab state.

Nationalist circles in Iran however have never forgiven the former imperial regime, toppled in the 1979 Islamic revolution, for the "loss" of Bahrain.

Renouncing its claim over Bahrain however allowed Iran to gain control of the three strategic islands in the Gulf, which control the vital Hormuz Straight—through which one-fifth of the world's crude oil is shipped.

Since the end of the Iran-Iraq war, during which Baghdad was supported by the Gulf monarchies, Tehran has tried to improve ties with the neighboring Arab states in a bid to lessen the influence of Western forces in the region.

A deputy foreign minister and brother of President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Mohammad Hashemi, visited Bahrain earlier this month to discuss regional issues.

Radio: Bahrain Rulers Should Heed People's Demand

LD2012132794 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The 15th summit of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, PGCC [GCC], states opened in Bahrain Monday, 19 December, when tension and unrest prevailed in this small shaykhdom. Public protesters which, according to Bahrain's Interior Ministry began on 5 December, have compelled the government to enforce strict security measures in the capital city of Manama. It, however, appears that the security forces are trying to subdue the people by resorting to tough measures. Reportedly they are also using firearms.

While some Bahraini officials are trying to attribute the public protests to foreign countries, the secretary general [of] Bahrain's human rights organization has dismissed this allegation, adding that renewed formation of the parliament in Bahrain and grant [as heard] of political freedom to the people are the demands of the protesters.

It must be noted that with the dissolution of the Bahrain parliament by Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the ruler of that country, in 1975, political freedoms too were banned. This is at a time when in recent years, due to the Persian Gulf war, purchase of abundant weapons by the shaykhdoms located south of the Persian Gulf, and also slump in oil prices, the economic situation in those countries has worsened. Bahrain too, which has only 550,000 foreign and native population, has not remained immune from this economic disorder. Unemployment rate in Bahrain has gone up tremendously.

Despite this, observers' believe that economic pressure too is involved in the present unrest in that country. Bahrain's Islamic Liberation Front, in a statement released Monday, December 19, while stressing the culmination of public protests in that country, has contended that Saudi security forces have rushed to the help of the Bahraini forces and participated in the suppression of the people. Assuming the veracity of this claim, one can infer that the situation is very critical and tense in this island. This is at a time when informed sources believe that the Manama government can terminate this unrest without resorting to violence and by considering the demands of the people.

Leniency Toward Diplomat Questioned

NC1612202394 Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian 13 Dec 94 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "Offenders Should Be Confronted"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Asghar Nahavandian, the Iranian ambassador in the Republic of Azerbaijan was recalled from Baku for engaging in commercial activities and not attending to his diplomatic obligations, and

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another person has taken over in his place. This is an unofficial and brief report but intrinsically important.

This has happened many times. However, for security reasons and, on occasion, because of the inattention of Foreign Ministry officials to the importance of such an event, it has been ignored. If the report is true—and it probably is—the issue should be viewed once and for all from the perspective of our national prestige and the long-term interests of the country.

Activities beyond the plane of the official assignment, especially involvement in economic and commercial activities by cultural and diplomatic representatives abroad, is a chronic problem that has gone on for years. Those who are in any way in contact with the politico-cultural officials and organizations—having observed such activities very clearly and with great displeasure—were rarely taken seriously. The matter was hardly ever tackled and even when it was, it was done in the form of a reprimand to the individual, removing him from office, and appointing him elsewhere, and the matter was considered closed.

The fact is that even though such an approach is necessary initially, it is not enough. This is because, first, it is not only the prerogative of the Foreign Ministry to tackle the issue and to reprimand, recall, and chastise and then construe this as the end of the matter. This is a national issue. One who goes to another country as a representative of a country, a symbol [preceding word in English] of national culture and determination represents the people as well. If he indulges in personal, commercial, and other activities outside the scope of his activities, this is tantamount to a misuse of his position as the people's representative and the public treasury as well. This should be seriously dealt with by the real guardian of the people's rights, which is the judiciary.

Why is it that thus far such offenders have not been dealt with overtly and seriously? Why have they never been impeached? Why has the Foreign Ministry not placed the necessary information before the people openly and officially?

It is the right of each and every individual of society to be privy to such issues. It is fallacious to think that, if such reports and information are made public to society, it would undermine the system. Unfortunately, weak management in most of the departments is considered synonymous with the weakness of the system, and this is incorrect. If the Foreign Ministry is not able to supervise the ambassadors and representatives completely and to prevent them from becoming involved in illegal activities, this is a weakness of the Foreign Ministry and is not connected to the system.

The Islamic system does not indulge in humor or formalities with anyone, and the Muslim people of Iran cannot tolerate these actions, which culminate in the vulnerability of our national prestige and public interests. These affairs should be brought out of the sidelines and propounded frankly in the public and social circles. Transgressors from all levels should be tackled so that the situation is rectified. Otherwise, this trend will continue and it is possible that our national interests may be in great danger.

Armenian Envoy Presents Credentials to Rafsanjani

LD2012120694 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Armenia's new ambassador presented his credential to Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani today. At the meeting, Vahan Arakeli Bayburdian noted the historical relations and cooperation between the two countries, and added: From the political point of view, the Islamic Republic of Iran is of great strategic importance to Armenia. He said: In the sphere of foreign trade, Armenia is in favor of further expansion of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly within the framework of our joint commissions.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani referred to the importance of the expansion of cooperation between the Islamic Republic and the Central Asian countries, and added: The establishment of peace, stability, and good-neighborliness between the states in the region, the preparation of favorable ground for removing problems, and the expansion of relations and cooperation in the region are especially important.

The president expressed the hope that with the cessation of tension between the republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia, and the normalization of transport routes between the two countries and the Islamic Republic, the ground will be prepared further for increasing the volume of trade and bilateral and regional cooperation.

Pakistan

Media View Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

Resisting U.S. 'Pressure' Advocated

BK2012101094 Islamabad THE NATION in English 20 Dec 94 p 8

[Editorial: "Resisting U.S. Pressure"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In a seminar on NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty], Pakistan and the US Pressure" hosted by the Institute of Policy Studies in Islamabad, various speakers stressed the importance of Pakistan retaining the nuclear option and, reflecting the popular public sentiment on the issue, decried the US for having double standards treating six countries as "holy cows and all else as sacrificial lambs." It is inevitable for any discussion of the issue in Pakistan to point to the selective use of common logic as also the principle of fairness by the US. The speakers here too tended to focus on the basic contradictions in the attitude of the advocates of non-proliferation, the US in particular, which

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make a distinction between the rights of certain countries to have nuclear capability, such as India and Israel, but pressure Pakistan to keep it from pursuing the nuclear option. There are, of course, different elements of the nuclear debate like the defenders of the disparity arguing that it is not right to equate the existing nuclear powers with the nuclear aspirant states as the former's status is a legacy of the Cold War era, and that they are willing to dismantle their nuclear arsenals, though in a phased programme. Of direct relevance to Pakistan is the stance of India which refuses to sign the NPT and accept any obligations under it while the declared nuclear powers have a privileged status within the NPT. Ironical as it is, even though Pakistan, unlike India, does not link its right to have the nuclear option with the big powers' claim to have the exclusive privilege of keeping nuclear arms, and is even willing to sign the NPT provided India does the same, yet the US has chosen to subject only Pakistan to a campaign of economic and political pressure. That being the situation one wonders how the US administration and some of its Congressional leaders, who have been engaged in devising all sorts of discriminatory measures, specifically applicable to Pakistan, expect the people here not to interpret the same in any other way than as an endorsement of India's hegemonic designs for the South Asian region.

As it is, even in the US there is a growing realisation that Pakistan does have a genuine security concern vis-a-vis India as long as the Kashmir problem remains unresolved. Hence, the discussion as to whether Pakistan should keep its option open to have a nuclear deterrent or not, has little value outside of academic deliberations. The real issue now is whether it is advisable at this point for Islamabad to come out in the open and declare its intentions or maintain the present posture of ambiguity. Even that does not seem to matter much to the public as long as it has the reassurance that there is no possibility of the government making a compromise on the issue, no matter how hard the US pressure. There is little difference of opinion among the major political parties as well as opinion leaders in general about the nuclear option being at the top of the nation's agenda for security. And so long as other factors, namely India's refusal to sign the NPT and the non-resolution of the Kashmir issue, remain the same, it would be unrealistic on the part of anyone to expect that it can force the Pakistanis to go for a unilateral "freezing" and "capping" of their nuclear programme, which they see as the last bet for the country's security.

Declaration on Nuclear Capability Urged

BK2112080494 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 20 Dec 94 p 4

[Editorial: "The Country's Security Demands a National Declaration on the Nuclear Capability"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Speakers at a seminar on Pakistan's nuclear program and the U.S. pressure have demanded that Pakistan ignore the safeguards and the pressure and declare its nuclear capability, because Pakistan's nuclear program guarantees its security and sovereignty. India is our eternal enemy, and it is not only superior to us in terms of conventional weapons but possesses a nuclear capability as well. Therefore, they said, Pakistan should never sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT].

There is no doubt that Pakistan is facing U.S. pressure due to its nuclear program, which the United States is constantly trying to eliminate. It has succeeded in this regard to the extent that the Pakistani nuclear program has been capped. This has already been acknowledged by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and former Army Chief Mirza Aslam Beg. As a next step, the United States wants Pakistan to freeze its nuclear program and eventually abandon it. Pursuing this objective, the United States has branded Pakistan in the world as a country possessing the "Islamic bomb" and has suspended all economic and military aid to Pakistan under the Pressler Amendment in an attempt to force this country to bow to the U.S. desire. The suspended aid included forms of assistance on which the two countries had concluded bilateral agreements. Under one of these agreements, Pakistan had paid for some F-16 planes. However, not only did the United States refuse to supply these planes, it is now demanding parking fees for them.

Similarly, attempts are also being made to paralyze Pakistan's economic and defense capabilities. Pakistan has supported every peace effort at every international forum and has protested the production of destructive weapons. Pakistan's proposals, in particular those relating to making the Indian Ocean a nuclear-free zone, have been widely accepted by the United Nations. Pakistan has never adopted a defiant posture on its nuclear program. It has always said that it is ready to sign the NPT provided India does the same. It would be suicidal for Pakistan to accept the treaty unilaterally, because India, according to the CIA, possesses the material to produce 60 to 100 atom bombs. Despite this, India terms the NPT as a threat to its security. This is the only deterrent we have against India. Despite this, the United States is bent upon destroying this deterrent.

Pakistan cannot match any Indian aggression with its conventional weapons and armed forces because India has amassed heaps of weapons and its Army, Air Force and blue water Navy have been developed keeping in mind the needs of a mini superpower. India's intentions against Pakistan have not been concealed from anyone. Since independence, it has carried out naked aggressions against Pakistan on three occasions—immediately after independence in 1948, in 1965, and in 1971. India succeeded in dismembering Pakistan during its last aggression against Pakistan.

India's eyes are now fixed on the remnants of Pakistan. It has already threatened to attack Azad Kashmir. India would have carried out it's unholy designs, God forbid, if

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Pakistan had not had a nuclear capability. It is an acknowledged fact that, despite the serious situation in Kashmir, India dare not launch an attack against Pakistan because of Pakistan's nuclear deterrent, which is like a talisman. The United States should keep all these realities in view and revise its double standards policy. Ironically, the United States does not object to India's nuclear program and gives full freedom to Israel to develop its nuclear capability; however, it puts pressure on Pakistan to destroy its nuclear capability merely because it is an Islamic country and is a source of strength for the Islamic world.

The United States should abandon its duplicity and double standards and act with realism and justice. It is also imperative upon our politicians that, despite their confrontation, they should show a national consensus on the nuclear issue. And when the prime minister has herself admitted that we have the parts to assembly a nuclear bomb and the opposition leader has also claimed in the National Assembly that Pakistan possesses a nuclear bomb, then the government and the entire nation should jointly declare that Pakistan does possess a nuclear capability. Such a declaration will be adequate to ensure the establishment of peace in the subcontinent.

Unilateral Signing of NPT Ruled Out

BK1912133094 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 19 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan firmly believes in long-term relationship based on justice and principles with all the countries of the world. He was speaking at the 16th Annual International Medical Conference and Second Annual Symposium of Liaqat Medical College at Jam Shoro today. The conference was jointly organized by the Pakistani physicians and the North American alumni of the medical college. The president apprised the delegates of various national issues, ranging from achieving the goals of economic stability to strengthening the democratic process in the country. Referring to the security requirements of the country, the president said:

[Begin Leghari recording] Pakistan can never allow an unjust solution to be thrust on us unilaterally, and that is what we have told our friends in the United States that so long as India has the nuclear option, so long as our security concerns are not adequately addressed, we will not sign any nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] or any of the other treaties of the same type. [applause]; and we also told the United States that they must exert and endeavor to resolve the issue. If India is willing to accept and sign the NPT, Pakistan would be willing to sign it simultaneously. [end recording]

Earlier, the officebearers of the association spelled out the details of the conference. Later, the president visited the scientific exhibition and went round various sections.

Energy Agreements With U.S. Firms Viewed

BK1912071194 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 18 Dec 94

[Commentary by Dr. A.R. Kamal]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] American firms have signed 18 agreements amounting to $2.5 billion. The projects relate to thermal power, oil, and gas. Bulk of investment would flow to the thermal power projects, which would consume $1.9 billion. Another 10 agreements amounting to $58 million are in the oil and gas concessions. Besides, there are power agreements worth $425 million for utilizing energy efficiency and renewable energy technology. There are also five bilateral agreements related to energy between Pakistan and the American Government. No doubt all these developments are quite encouraging and show the enthusiastic response received by Pakistan's energy policy. We may note that agreements worth $4 billion were earlier agreed by the American firms and more than $8 billion was agreed by a Hong Kong firm. There have been queries from many other countries as well.

Out of power, oil, and gas, Pakistan has received maximum investment in power. This is hardly surprising because government is also providing top priority to that. However, that does not imply in any way that others are less important. As a matter of fact, their significance has even enhanced because thermal power would use oil and gas as the fuel. If we are unable to develop our oil and gas, then the import bill is going to increase rather sharply. Nevertheless, we may note that the oil and gas development is risky and involves uncertainty. It is also very capital intensive and needs enormous resources. [Word indistinct] we received with the help of foreign companies is making an effort to explore the oil and gas possibility and then develop it. What impact these energy projects will have on the (?commons) needs to be examined. That the load shedding has caused miseries to the people is quite well known. Obviously, the households would feel much better when the problem is resolved. Moreover, the World Bank has estimated that load shedding causes loss of $1 billion per year to Pakistan's economy. Avoidance of this loss implies higher value of output and employment. This will also tend to reduce the rate of inflation. Therefore, such investment is rather useful for the common man.

However, one wonders about the price at which WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority] has to purchase its electricity and then shift it to the consumer. Pakistan has offered the investors a price of 6.5 cents per unit while it is much higher than that offered by many other countries. One can find a country where the price offered may have been even below. However, that is besides the point. We have to see whether this price is higher than the generation cost of WAPDA. We have to examine whether WAPDA can provide 5,000 megawatts in the next three years and we have to analyze whether the price offered would yield

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higher output. No doubt WAPDA's average cost is considerably lower than the 6.5 cents per unit. However, whether the marginal thermal unit also has a lower cost is debatable. Nevertheless, even if WAPDA's cost of generation is lower, the irony is that WAPDA does not have the resources which are required to generate 5,000 megawatts in the next few years. Obviously, the choice is to attract foreign investment. Unfortunately, at lower prices foreign investment could not have been attracted. Since Pakistan can save at least $1 billion per year if load shedding problem is resolved, the cost of electricity, even if higher, is worth it.

As regards to impact of cost on common man, we must remember that small consumers have very low tariff, as it is already subsidized. This subsidy can continue even when foreign investment is there. The larger consumers are already paying much higher price than that is implicit in 6.5 cents per unit. Now that Pakistan has signed memorandums of understanding with America, Hong Kong, and other countries, we have to make an effort that investments are eventually realized.

Jamaat-i-Islami Plans Anti-U.S. Rally During Visit

BK1712124094 Karachi DAWN in English 17 Dec 94 p 5

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, Dec 16—The Jamaat-i-Islami chief, Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad, has alleged that an American delegation is coming to Islamabad on Jan 7 to make Pakistan sign an agreement to dismantle its nuclear programme.

In a statement on Friday [16 December], he said his party would hold a big rally in Rawalpindi on Jan 6 against the alleged plan and with public cooperation, thwart the government's move to trade off national interests.

He appealed to the people to join the rally.

Referring to the political situation, the Jamaat leader said its solution did not lie in removing Ms Benazir Bhutto and bringing Mr Nawaz Sharif, Zafarrullah Khan Jamali or Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi back into power.

All these people, he said had already been tried and they had failed to put the country on path to progress. The situation, he said, was a continuation of the past, implying that the previous rulers were equally responsible for the prevailing political mess.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad said he had launched a mass contact movement to tell the people what was the situation in the country and what were their responsibilities. Then, he said, his party would organise rallies and in the third phase, a call would be given for a "big and complete change."

He said his party had tried its best to save the Nawaz Sharif government by bringing about a rapprochement between President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the Prime Minister. But, he alleged, was Mr Nawaz Sharif who retreated and along with Ms Bhutto accepted Mr Moin Qureshi as the caretaker prime minister.

He said the question as to why Mr Sharif had accepted "dictation" still remained unanswered.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad alledged that the PML [Pakistan Muslim League] leadership had nothing to do with the party which had created Pakistan. He said the PML workers were sincere and appealed to them to cooperate with the Jamaat to achieve the ideals of the Pakistan movement.

The Jamaat Amir was critical of the decisions taken by the OIC [Islamic Conference Organization, ICO] summit in Casablanca. "Instead of discussing the problems facing the Ummah and working our their solution, a resolution has been adopted against the Islamic movements. These people are not custodians of the Islamic but Zionist interests", he said of the OIC leaders.

Bhutto Comments on ICO Kashmir Resolution

BK1912155294 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 19 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Pakistan People's Party' parliament members and allied parties met in Islamabad today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The prime minister briefed the meeting participants about her visit to Casablanca and informed them about the efforts as a result of which Pakistan succeeded in getting the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO] to reaffirm the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the Casablanca Declaration. The prime minister said the declaration specifically mentions the three main issues facing the Islamic community—al-Qods al-Sharif, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Jammu and Kashmir. The prime minister said Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic met with her and especially thanked her for Pakistan's support for the Bosnian people. The parliamentary party meeting participants expressed sincere appreciation for the abiding commitment of the prime minister to the just struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and her principled and consistent policy, which helped in mobilizing international support for the just cause of Kashmir. The meeting participants also welcomed summit resolutions, especially a comprehensive resolution on Jammu and Kashmir. They also commended the ICO secretary general for his role in ensuring the participation of the leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference and the president of Azad Kashmir at the ICO summit. The participants noted that the Pakistani prime minister, the presidents of Turkey and Niger, and the Saudi Arabian crown prince and governor met with the Kashmiri leaders and reaffirmed their earnest support for Kashmir's just cause. The participants thanked King Hassan of Morocco for hosting the ICO summit and for his devotion to Islamic community affairs.

At the meeting, the prime minister gave a briefing about the Karachi situation. She said that the government of

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Sind has taken steps in the right direction. She told members that some of the terrorists arrested have provided some clues that will help the authorities to control the situation. She *emphatically stated* that the government is fully alert to the situation and is committed to taking concrete steps to eliminate the menace of terrorism from Karachi. In this regard, the record of terrorist activities during the last 10 years is being investigated so that habitual criminals may be apprehended.

South Africa Reportedly Agrees To Upgrade Mirages

BK1812105894 Lahore JANG in Urdu 14 Dec 94 pp 1, 7

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamabad—Responsible sources say that South Africa will cooperate with Pakistan in upgrading its Mirage fighter planes. Mazhar Rafi, secretary in the Ministry of Defense Production, during his visit to South Africa held talks on the possibilities of cooperation between the two countries in the defense sector during which the two countries agreed that South Africa would extend active cooperation to Pakistan in upgrading the Mirage aircraft. The responsible sources say that a formal invitation from Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani to his South African counterpart to pay a visit to Pakistan was sent on 13 December.

PRC Offers To Supply Industrial Technology

BK2012145094 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 20 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] China is ready to transfer technologies for a larger number of industries to Pakistan along with the offers for joint industrial ventures.

This was stated by the leader of the delegation of the State Science and Technology Commission of China, Madame (Yang Yang Sheng), at a meeting with office-bearers and members of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry today. She said China is also interested in supplying machinery and plants along with technology to Pakistan. The president of the chamber said they gave great importance to the Chinese technical cooperation and assistance to develop the pace of industrialization in Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

Government Reportedly Preparing LTTE 'Peace Package'

BK1812111194 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 18 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has begun drafting its own proposals for a political solution to the ethnic conflict. High-ranking government sources said that the process of formulating a package of proposals would take place parallel to the government initiative to talk with the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to bring an end to the war in the northeast. All political parties will be notified of the proposals once they are ready and their suggestions and thinking on the matter will be solicited in order to give the final touches to the package.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga met parliamentarians of Tamil political parties last week, but Tamil political sources said that the ethnic issue did not come up for serious discussion. Tamil groups said that their meeting with the president covered matters of political cooperation and issues immediately affecting the population in the war affected zone. The move to draft its own formula for a political settlement of the decade-old conflict comes as the government awaits developments regarding its informal exchanges with the LTTE about a resumption of the peace dialogue. President Kumaratunga last Monday [12 December] told a group of journalists that the LTTE had replied to the government's message and had agreed in principle to a cessation of hostilities. The government, while preparing to work out the modalities of such a cessation of offensive military action, is sticking to its position that it would implement a cease-fire only if there is understanding that this would lead to the beginning of serious peace negotiations between the government and the LTTE.

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